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THE LIFE OF
TOLSTOY

BY
OSCAR WILDE



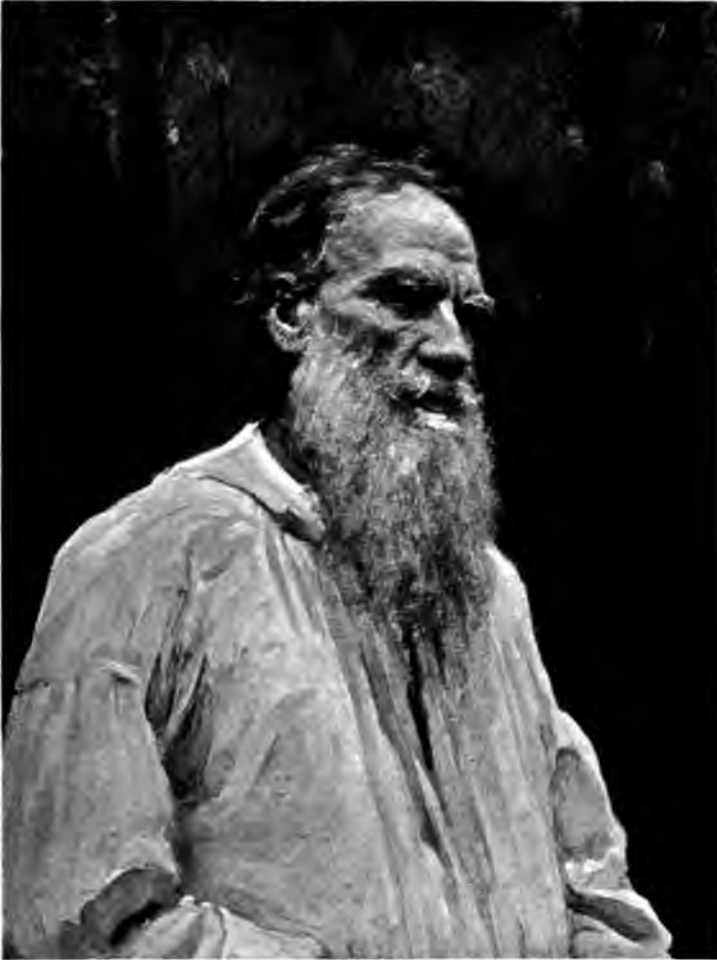
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THE LIFE OF TOLSTOY



Les Talbot.

THE
LIFE OF **TOLSTOY**

BY
PAUL BURGESS

TRANSLATED BY THE AUTHOR

With Reminiscences Photographs, Documents
and the Black-and-White Film

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LIMITED
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne

1911

PG 3385
BS-712

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

AMONG the late Count Tolstoy's intimate friends it is a matter for regret that, in the English language, there is no reliable biography of the great Russian teacher. In their opinion all existing works are marred by the entirely wrong standpoint from which the authors regard, and try to expound, the important facts of Tolstoy's life and the tenets of his philosophy.

M. Paul Birukoff was one of Tolstoy's closest friends, and Tolstoy himself actually collaborated with him in the present work, and selected personally the letters and other documents from which extracts have been quoted. With remarkable knowledge of his great compatriot's private life, M. Birukoff has also brought to his task an understanding of Tolstoy's ideals and a peculiar gift for sober, unbiased criticism.

For this English edition M. Birukoff, with the approval of the executors, has written a prefatory note and a short account of Tolstoy's latter days.

PREFACE

THE newspapers of November 12, 1910, communicated the fact that Leo Tolstoy had definitely left his home at Yasnaya Polyana. From that moment the whole civilised world, with intense interest, began to follow all the movements of the "Grand Old Man." Not only had he left Yasnaya Polyana, but he had decided to isolate himself from the world. This act, unexpected by the public but long anticipated by intimate friends, revealed again the greatness of Tolstoy, and conquered even the hearts of the most indifferent sceptics, till then smiling superciliously at his "eccentricities."

Whatever may have been the determining private factor of his departure, the chief cause was the contradiction between his conception of life, growing more and more definite and distinct, and the mode of life which he was obliged to follow at home. Thus his departure was the act of a man energetically and sincerely true to his words—which many people were doubting him to be. It was owing to this fact that his action produced

so magical a change in public opinion, especially among the numerous people who, though admiring Tolstoy, never took him quite seriously, thinking that he would be unable himself to carry out the message he preached to others.

The events following his leaving Yasnaya Polyana, and his illness at Astapovo, only increased the deep public interest. His death came as the inevitable epilogue of an act for the continuation of which his strength was not sufficient. It was a majestic conclusion to a great life, which had been one incessant struggle for truth, reason, and love.

This short biographical sketch is an attempt to give the reader a simple enumeration of the chief events of Tolstoy's wonderful life, and an indication of the inner, spiritual development of his great soul.

P. BIRUKOFF.

ST. PETERSBURG, ¹⁵/₂₈ April, 1911.

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I

B

THE LIFE OF TOLSTOY

CHAPTER I

TOLSTOY'S FORBEARS

FIFTEEN versts to the south of Tula, on the old main road to Kieff, lies the village Yasnaya Polyana. Close to it, but separated by a hollow and a pond, is picturesquely situated the old Volkonsky manor house, which came into the Tolstoy family through the marriage of the Princess Marie Volkonsky to Nicolas the son of Count Eliah Tolstoy.

This Princess Marie Volkonsky and Count Nicolas Tolstoy were the parents of Leo Tolstoy, who was born on August 28, 1828, at Yasnaya Polyana, where he spent the greater part of his life, thus in Leo Nicolaievitch Tolstoy the blood of two famous families was united—that of the princely family of Volkonsky and that of the Counts Tolstoy.

The origin of the Tolstoy family is not definitely

known. Some historians believe that the founder was a German. Others suppose that he was a Lithuanian, and still others trace his descent from a Tartar Khan. The first Count was Peter Tolstoy, a distinguished statesman, an able politician, and a *grand seigneur*. A dark stain on his memory remains, however, on account of his active participation in the assassination of the Tsarevitch Alexis, the son of Peter the Great. He was appointed Chief of the Secret Service by Peter, and generally enjoyed the close confidence of the Emperor and, later, of the Empress Catherine I., on the day of whose coronation he was created a Count. But when Peter II., the son of the assassinated Alexis, came to the throne, Count Peter Tolstoy lost his position. He was deprived of his title and, at the age of eighty-two, deported to the Solovetsky Monastery on the White Sea, where he died shortly after. The title was restored to the Tolstoy family in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great.

The grandfather of Leo Tolstoy, Count Eliah, was, as we know from his grandson's testimony, a simple-minded man—kind, soft-hearted, gay, and not only generous, but somewhat of a spendthrift. Dinners, theatrical representations, balls, card-playing, and parties were constantly taking

place at his country-seat ; but this mode of life ended in the large property of his wife becoming so heavily mortgaged that the pair had nothing to live on, and Count Eliah was obliged to solicit the post of governor of the Kazan province, which he obtained. His wife, the grandmother of Leo Tolstoy, born Princess Pelagie Gorchakoff, had received only a superficial education, but nevertheless she spoke French better than Russian. She was generally a much-spoilt woman.

The ancestors on Tolstoy's mother's side, the Princes Volkonsky, trace their origin to Rurik. At the beginning of the fourteenth century Prince John, of the thirteenth generation from Rurik, received the fief of Volkonsky, situated on the River Volkonka, in the present province of Kaluga and Tula, and from him the family of Volkonsky is descended. Leo Tolstoy's maternal grandfather, Prince Nicolas Volkonsky, after an eventful career in the service of the State, resigned, married Princess Catherine Trubetskoy, and settled in Yasnaya Polyana, inherited from his father. In his memoirs Tolstoy says of him :

“ Princess Catherine died early and left him an only daughter, Marie. With this much-loved daughter and her French companion, my grand-

father lived till his death in 1821. My grandfather was considered a very severe landlord, but I never heard any stories of cruelty or punishment, so usual at that time. I think these existed, but the house servants and peasants, though they freely criticised my father, when I questioned them about my grandfather appeared so deeply impressed by his imposing personality and his intelligence that I heard nothing but praise of his intellect, his management of the estate, his care of the peasants, and especially of the house servants.

“Evidently he was a man of extremely refined tastes. All the buildings he constructed are not only solid and comfortable, but exceedingly handsome. The same may be said of the park laid out by him in front of the house. It seems that he was also very fond of music, as he kept a small but good orchestra entirely for his own and my mother’s pleasure.* During his morning walks in the park, this private band used to play for him. He hated hunting, but was a great lover of flowers and exotic plants.”

* An orchestra of serfs. Until the middle of the last century aristocratic families used to send their serfs to Moscow and St. Petersburg to learn arts and crafts. Returning often as accomplished artisans and even artists, they nevertheless had again to take their places as serfs.—*Translator.*

Shortly after the death of her father, Princess Marie married Count Nicolas Tolstoy. About his parents we read in Leo Tolstoy's personal reminiscences :

“My father was of an average height, well built, of a vivacious, sanguine temperament; he had a pleasant face and always sad eyes. Though not an expert, he occupied himself during his whole life with the management of his estate. However, he possessed one remarkable quality for that period. Not only was he not cruel, but even rather lenient, so that during his lifetime I never heard of corporal punishment being administered on his estate.”

The character of the relations between Leo Tolstoy and his father may be gathered from the following description :

“I remember him sitting, with his pipe, on the leather-covered sofa in his study, where we used to go to bid him good-night or to play. He petted us, and sometimes, to our great delight, allowed us to crawl behind his back on the sofa whilst he continued to read or to talk to the steward or to my godfather, S. Yazykoff, who often was staying with us. I remember him coming down to us children and drawing pictures which appeared to us the highest

perfection of art. On another occasion he made me recite Pushkin's poems, 'To the Sea,' and 'To Napoleon,' which I liked very much and had learned by heart. Evidently he was struck by the pathos of my recitation, and, listening until the end, exchanged a significant look with Yazykoff. I understood that he saw something good in my recitation, and I was very happy."

Nicolas Tolstoy, at the age of sixteen, had entered the army, and took part in the campaigns of 1813 and 1814. Having been sent somewhere in Germany as a courier, he was taken prisoner by the French and was not liberated until 1815, when the Russian army entered Paris. The war over, he retired from military service. Shortly after, his father, Leo Tolstoy's grandfather, died, and Nicolas was left with a ruined estate and a spoilt mother, who was accustomed to luxury and of extravagant habits. His relatives arranged his marriage with the rich Princess Marie Volkonsky.

Princess Marie was a remarkable woman in every respect. Leo was only eighteen months old when she died, so that he had no recollection of her, but from what his aunts and other intimates told him, he created a very tender, loving, and beautiful image of his mother. In his memoirs he gives some of her characteristics :



Tolstoy's House at Yasnaya Polyana.

“By a strange coincidence not a single portrait of her exists, so that I cannot represent her to myself as a real, physical being. Partly, I am pleased with this, because in my imagination exists only her moral personality; and all that I know about her was beautiful, and I think that was not because the people who told me of her wished to say something kind, but because there really was great goodness in her.

“My mother was not handsome, but very well educated for her day. Besides Russian, which she wrote grammatically—an exception in her time—she knew French, English, German, and Italian, and she must have had an artistic disposition.

“She played the piano well, and her friends told me that she had a great talent for telling, and even improvising, stories. But the most precious trait in her character was her self-control, although by nature very excitable. Her maid used to tell me: ‘Sometimes she grew red all over, even cried, but never used rough expressions.’ She did not know them. My mother spent her childhood partly in Moscow, partly in the country with her father, an intelligent, proud, and gifted man. Her life at home with her father was, as I can tell from letters and from what I heard, very happy and pleasant. I was told that my

mother loved me very much and used to call me '*mon petit Benjamin.*' She appeared to me such a pure, moral being, that often in the middle period of my life, when I was seized by doubts, I prayed to her soul for assistance, and that prayer always helped me."

Such is the spiritual image of Tolstoy's mother. His father also died early, when Leo was only nine years old, and the children—four brothers and one sister—were left in the care of an aunt.

CHAPTER II

CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD, AND YOUTH

MUCH about Tolstoy's childhood is to be found in the fragmentary memoirs he wrote for various editions of his works. His novel, "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth," cannot be considered a true picture of his own early days, as in it reality is blended with imagination.

His recollections went very far back. He faintly remembers how he was swaddled, and bathed in a tub.

"It is a strange and awful thought," he says in his "First Recollections," "that from my birth to the age of three, during which time I was suckled, I began to crawl, to walk, and to speak; yet in spite of all my efforts I cannot find anything to remember except the two facts of swaddling and bathing. When did my existence commence? When did I begin to live? And why should it give me pleasure to represent myself at the beginning of life, and dread seizes me, as it does many others, at the thought of re-entering a

non-existence of which there will be no remembrance expressible in words? . . . From a five-year-old child to my present self is only a step; from a new-born infant to a five-year-old child the distance is enormous; from an embryo to a new-born it is immeasurable; but between non-existence and the embryonic state the distance is not only immeasurable but also inconceivable."

In Leo Tolstoy's first clear recollections he saw himself playing with his nurse, Yeremeëvna, and the German male nurse, Theodore Ressel, described in "Childhood" under the name of Carl Mauer. Further, there was Tatiana Yergolsky, a distant relative of the family, but called by them "Auntie," and to Tolstoy the dearest person in the world. According to his own words, after his father and mother, she had the greatest influence on his life.

She was a gentle, loving woman, but at the same time of a strong, decisive character. To Leo Tolstoy she was a second mother. With the exception of a few years which he spent in Kazan and in the Caucasus, they passed their lives together under the same roof of Yasnaya Polyana, where she died in 1875. Tolstoy describes her beneficent power over him in the following words:

"Aunt Tatiana had the greatest influence on my life. It was she who taught me while yet in

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my childhood the moral joy of love. Not by words, but by her whole being she imbued me with love. I saw, I felt, how happy she was in loving, and I understood the joy of love. That was the first lesson. The second is that she taught me the beauty of a quiet, lonely life.”

Another person who had a strong and good influence on his childhood was his elder brother, Nicolas. In the following words Tolstoy speaks of this elder brother and the childish games he was in the habit of inventing for his younger brothers :

“ Nicolas was six years older than I. He must have been between ten and eleven years, and I between four and five, when he was leading us to ‘Fanfaron Hill.’ I do not know how it happened, but we children used to address him with ‘you.’* He was a remarkable boy and, later, a remarkable man. Turgenev quite correctly observed that he only lacked the imperfections necessary for the making of an author. He did not possess the principal and necessary defect—vanity; he was not at all interested in what people thought of him. But the qualities of an author which he did possess were a refined,

* In Russian, as in French, in familiar language “thou” is used.—*Translator.*

artistic instinct, an exceedingly delicate sense of proportion, a good-natured, gay humour, exceptional and inexhaustible imagination, and high moral conceptions; and all this without any conceit. He had such an imagination, that for hours he could tell humorous tales and ghost stories in the style of Mrs. Radcliffe, with so much earnestness and such an air of reality that one forgot it was fiction.

“When I was five years old, and my brothers Dimitri and Sergius six and seven, Nicolas announced to us that he possessed the secret which, if known, would make everybody happy. There would be no illness, no trouble, nobody would feel anger against another, and people would begin to love each other and live in ‘Ants’ Brotherhood.’ (Probably he meant Moravian Brotherhood,* about which he had read or heard; but in our children’s minds it was ‘Ants’ Brotherhood.’) I remember that the word ‘ants’ especially pleased us, reminding us of the ants in their hills. We even invented a game of ‘Ants’ Brotherhood.’ We crept under chairs, placed boxes around them, covered up all chinks with handkerchiefs, and sat in the darkness pressed against each other. I remember that I used then to have a particular

* The Russian for “Ant” is *muravei*.—*Translator*.

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feeling of love and tenderness, and I liked the play very much.

“The secret of the ‘Ants’ Brotherhood’ had been disclosed to us; but the great secret—how to banish all unhappiness from life, all disputes and anger, and to make people happy for ever—this secret, as he told us, he had written on a green stick, and the green stick was buried near the road along the hollow by the old wood. As my body must find somewhere a resting-place, I beg that I may be buried on that spot in memory of my brother Nicolas.

“Besides this stick there was somewhere a ‘Fanfaron Hill,’ to which he might lead us if we could fulfil certain conditions. These conditions were: First, to stand in a corner and not to think of a white bear; (I remember how I stood in the corner, and tried hard not to think of that white bear, but without success; (second, to walk along a straight line without stumbling; and third—which was easy—during a whole year not to see a hare, whether dead, alive, or roasted. At the end of all to swear not to disclose these secrets to anyone.

“The ideal of the ant brethren clinging lovingly together, not under two chairs covered by handkerchiefs, but under the wide, blue vault

of heaven and embracing all mankind, has remained. As I believed then in the existence of a green stick on which was written the secret which would do away with all evil in humanity and give great happiness, so I believe now that there exists such a truth; this will be divulged to mankind and all promises will be fulfilled."

Leo Tolstoy speaks also of his other brothers :

"With Dimitri I was comrade, Nicolas I respected, but Sergius I adored, imitated, loved, and wished to resemble. I worshipped his handsome exterior, his singing (he was always singing), his drawing, his gaiety, but especially, strange to say, his frank egoism. † I always used to be self-conscious, and always felt and guessed, rightly or wrongly, what others thought and felt towards me; and that always spoilt the pleasure of my life. That is probably why in others I so much liked the very opposite—frank egoism. For that reason I particularly loved Sergius. The word 'love' is not correct; I loved Nicolas, but Sergius I worshipped as something strange and foreign to my nature. Such a human life appeared to me beautiful, but quite incomprehensible and mysterious, and was therefore especially attractive."

The brother Dimitri, in his youth, was very religious and unselfish; his self-sacrifice bordered

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on asceticism, which undoubtedly had its influence on Leo.

It is necessary to point out yet one other influence bearing on his early childhood which Tolstoy himself recognises. His family observed all the traditions and customs of the Greek Orthodox Church. One of these customs was the hospitality extended to all sorts of pilgrims—men as well as women, to monks and nuns, and to *Yurodivy*. The latter is a strange manifestation of piety, but has undoubtedly its historical meaning. It reminds one somewhat of Eastern dervishes, but is quite characteristic of Russian popular life, and it left a deep impression on Tolstoy in his early childhood.

On this subject we read in his memoirs :

“Yurodivy Gregory is a fiction. Many of them passed through our house, and I was taught to look upon them with great respect, for which I am deeply thankful to my elders. Even if hypocrites were amongst them, or if in their lives there were periods of weakness and insincerity, nevertheless the aim of their lives, though practically absurd, was so high that I rejoice that from my very childhood I unconsciously learnt to appreciate the loftiness of their purpose. They carried out the saying of Marcus Aurelius: ‘There is

nothing higher than to bear contempt for your good life.' The temptation to glorify oneself is so pernicious and unavoidable, and so intermingled with all good acts, that one cannot help feeling sympathy for those who not only try to evade praise, but actually provoke contempt. Such a Yurodivy was my sister's godmother, Maria Gerasimovna, the simpleton Evdokimushka, and some others."

All these influences created the peculiar, charming, poetic-spiritual atmosphere of Leo Tolstoy's early childhood, and made it possible for him to write in such enthusiastic terms on the memories of that time: "Happy, happy past years of childhood! How could I fail to love and cherish their memory! Their remembrance refreshes, lifts up my soul, and is the source of my greatest delight."

The children grew up and required increased attention. For the sake of the more serious studies of the elder brother, Nicolas, the whole family removed to Moscow.

Just at that time three deaths occurred, one following the other: first, Leo Tolstoy's father, eighteen months later the grandmother, and finally the aunt and guardian of the children Baroness Osten-Saken. The guardianship then passed to another aunt, Pelagie Yushkoff. She

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was living at Kazan and brought all the Tolstoy children there, for whom a new life opened. This happened in 1841. Leo was thirteen years old, and certain definite traits began to appear in his character. "Boyhood" gives some autobiographical material. Vanity was one of those character traits of Leo Tolstoy against which he had to fight hard, and which probably more than once troubled his peace of mind. In his childhood this manifested itself in a rough, primitive, naive form. He was particular about his appearance, and was miserable when he saw in the mirror that he was not handsome. His shyness, the opposition of vanity, also caused him much suffering. He early developed a disposition to reason and to analyse, certain definite sceptical conceptions being the result.

This is what the hero of "Boyhood" says :

"No other philosophic system ever carried me so completely away as scepticism, which at one time brought me to a state bordering on madness. I imagined that nobody and nothing existed in the whole world save myself—that objects were not objects, but images appearing only when I paid attention to them, and the moment I ceased to think of them those images immediately disappeared. In a word, I agreed with Schelling's

conviction that no objects exist, but only my relation to them. There were moments when, under the influence of this fixed idea, I had reached such a degree of absurdity that I sometimes turned abruptly to the other side in the hope of catching a glimpse of the void."

Developing irregularly, but rapidly, Leo Tolstoy reached adolescence and entered the University of Kazan. His three elder brothers were already there. He first chose the faculty of Eastern Languages, but not passing his examination at the end of the first year, he went over to that of Law. Here things went a little better, but nevertheless, towards the close of the second year, his zeal had considerably cooled. His studies were carried on irregularly. His ardent, passionate and independent nature could not adapt itself to the routine of the instruction given at that time.

On the other hand, the social life of his guardian, Yushkoff, who occupied a prominent position in the highest society circles of Kazan, attracted him to worldly pleasures. Balls, theatres, visits, etc., filled his winter hours, effectually hindering his studies. Besides, being a young man inclined to independent intellectual work, once absorbed in some subject he neglected every other. All this certainly did not tend towards success in his



Tolstoy as a student.



**Tolstoy in the uniform of
an artillery officer.**



The Kazan University, in Tolstoy's student days.

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studies. Often he missed lectures which he disliked, and once even was put in the University gaol. At repetitions and examinations he received bad marks. But a sympathetic subject once found, he gave himself up entirely to its study, thoroughly thinking it over. Such a subject usually aroused his creative power, and some literary work, of which the manuscripts still exist, was the result—such as, for instance, an essay comparing Montesquieu's "De l'Esprit des Lois" with Catherine's "Instructions" (Nakaz). This was a university thesis chosen by the noted professor of the Kazan University, Meyer, one of the few who had an influence on him.

At that time Leo Tolstoy was already writing a diary, and attempting to describe his observations on his surroundings and the exposition of his philosophic ideas. All these writings are imbued with high moral sentiments. In March, 1847, for instance, he wrote as follows:

"I have changed much, but I have not yet reached the degree of perfection (in my studies) which I want to attain. I do not carry out what I decide to do; what I do, I do not well; I am not training my memory. For that purpose I write down a few rules, which, it seems to me, will greatly help if I keep to them:

" 1. What you have decided to do, do in spite of everything.

" 2. Whatever you do, do it well.

" 3. Never consult a book for what you have forgotten, but try to remember it.

" 4. Force always your brains to act to their utmost capacity.

" 5. Read and think aloud.

" 6. Do not hesitate to tell people if they hinder you. At first give them a hint; if they do not understand (that they hinder you), apologise and tell them so."

Further on he says:

" Society is a part of the universe. Reason must be brought into harmony with the universe—with the whole—so that by studying its laws one may become independent of society, as a part of it."

Here is his definition of the philosophy of that time:

" Man has desires; otherwise said, he is active. Towards what is his activity directed? By what means can this activity be made free? This is the aim of philosophy in its true sense. In other words, philosophy is the science of life."

In his novel, " Youth," Tolstoy places in the mouth of his hero words which undoubtedly re-

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flected his own youthful state of mind. These thoughts are expressed in a fine lyrical form :

“The moon rose higher and higher, growing brighter and brighter in the firmament, the dazzling glitter of the pond, by degrees increasing like a sound, became clearer and clearer ; the shadows grew darker and darker, the light more and more transparent ; and, contemplating and listening to all this, something whispered to me that ‘ she,’ with bare arms and passionate embrace, was yet far from complete happiness, and my love for her was not yet perfect felicity. The more I gazed at the high, full moon, true beauty and goodness appeared to me higher and higher, purer and purer, nearer and nearer to Him, the source of all beauty and goodness ; and the tears of an unsatisfied, but agitating, rapture rose in my eyes.

“ And still I was alone, and it appeared to me that mysterious, grand Nature, the alluring, brilliant disc of the moon, resting as if immovable on an undefined point in the pale blue sky, yet at the same time shining everywhere and pervading the whole immeasurable space—and I, a worthless worm, already corrupted by petty and miserable human passions, but possessing a boundless power of loving—it seemed to me at those moments

as if—Nature and the moon and I—we all were one.”

Dissatisfied with university studies, Tolstoy, taking advantage of the first opportunity that presented itself—the completion of his brother Nicolas' university career—threw up his own studies and went with him to Yasnaya Polyana.

There he did not remain long. The cruel conditions surrounding serfdom, which Tolstoy already felt deeply in his soul, did not permit him to show his sincere sympathy. He was not in circumstances to become a philanthropist for slaves. He described such an unsuccessful attempt in a novelette, entitled, “A Morning of a Landowner.” Then he went to St. Petersburg, one may say, to seek happiness. This was the stormiest and the most passionate period of his life. At one moment he intended to travel abroad, at another prepared himself for the university examination, then again proposed to enter on a military career. He played at cards, made debts, was attracted by gipsy singers, and generally was leading an irregular life. And all this was interrupted by gloomy, but very beneficent, moments of consciousness of his moral degradation.

In his diary of that time we find the following lines :

CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD, YOUTH 25

“I am living like a beast, though not entirely depraved; my studies are nearly all abandoned, and spiritually I am very low.”

A part of that period Tolstoy spent in Moscow, but there also his life was no better.

During these stormy, worldly pleasures—gambling, attacks of sensuality, passion for hunting—suddenly a period of religious humility akin to asceticism set in. And in this dark background shone, like glittering sparks, the first attempts at artistic creation.

An end came to this changeable, dangerous period of his life upon his unexpected journey to the Caucasus.

CHAPTER III

MILITARY SERVICE

TOLSTOY's elder brother, Nicolas, having finished his university studies, entered the military service and joined the artillery in the Caucasus. In April, 1851, just when the turbulent period in Leo Tolstoy's life had reached its greatest height and threatened to ruin irremediably his moral life, already blossoming with promise—just at that moment his brother Nicolas arrived on leave from the Caucasus. He saw at once the danger of the situation, and persuaded Leo to return with him to the Caucasus. It was not difficult to persuade Leo; he was consumed by passions, and seized his brother's proposal as a last means of salvation.

That same spring they started for the south. Both young men liked to be rather original, and they did not follow the usual route from Moscow straight to Voronesh, but first they went east, to Kazan, where they spent a few days with their guardian Yushkoff. Here Leo Tolstoy fell in love with a young girl, Zenaïde Molostoff, and in

the happiest state of mind he started with his brother from Kazan to Saratoff in their own coach. At the latter place they embarked, with their carriage, on a large boat and, sometimes sailing, sometimes rowing, they arrived at Astrakhan. Thence by coach to Kizliar—the place where Nicolas Tolstoy was quartered. This was the journey that was afterwards so picturesquely described by Tolstoy in his novel, “The Cossacks.”

Very soon the battery in which Nicolas Tolstoy was serving was transferred to the fortified camp, Stary-Yurt, this detachment being destined to protect from Circassian raids the newly-erected sanatorium at the hot, strong, mineral springs. The camp was situated at the foot of the mountain, beside the springs, and on the slopes of the mountain the houses of the Circassian village Stary-Yurt were picturesquely spread out. In a letter to his aunt Tatiana, Leo Tolstoy describes this beautiful spot in the mountains :

“This is a large mountain of piled-up rocks. Some of these in their fall have formed grottos; some are still hanging high in the air. In many places streams of hot water are rushing down noisily. The white steam from this boiling water envelops and obscures, in the morning especially, the upper part of the rocks. The water is so hot

that in three minutes one can boil eggs in it quite hard. In the ravine, on the torrent, three mills, one above the other, are built in a very curious, but attractive way. The whole day Tartar women are seen moving above and below the mills, washing their clothes. I must tell you that they wash with their feet. There is always great activity, like the bustle in an ant-hill. The women mostly are handsome and well-built. The dress of Oriental women, however poor, is always graceful . . . Picturesque groups of women, the wild beauty of nature—all this makes a delightful scene. Often I stand for hours contemplating the landscape.”

The greater part of his three years' stay in the Caucasus Leo Tolstoy spent at Stary-Yurt. The beauty of the scenery of the mountainous country formed the background for the beautiful descriptions of nature in his novels on life in the Caucasus. We quote from “The Cossacks” the following splendid picturing of the mountains :

“The morning was perfectly cloudless. Suddenly he saw, at a distance of only twenty paces as it seemed to him at first, brilliant white masses with their delicate outlines, and the fantastic, sharply defined contours of their summits against the distant sky. When he realised the great dis-



Tolstoy's House at Moscow.

tance between him and the mountains and the sky, when he understood the immensity of the mountains, when he felt their infinite beauty, he was awed, thinking it was a vision—a dream. He shook himself in order to come to his senses. The mountains were still the same.

“ ‘What is that? What is that?’ he asked the driver.

“ ‘The mountains!’ Nogai answered indifferently.

“ ‘I also have been looking at them a long time,’ said John. ‘How beautiful! At home they will not believe it.’

“ With the quick driving of the troika on a level road, the mountains seemed to be running along the horizon, their rose-coloured summits shining in the rising sun. At first the mountains simply astonished Olenin; then they delighted him; but afterwards the more and more he gazed on that chain of snow-capped peaks rising not from above other dark mountains, but directly from the steppe, he began, little by little, to understand and to feel their beauty. From that moment all that he saw, all that he thought and felt, began to assume for him a new character, that of the severe majesty of the mountains. All Moscow memories, the shame and regrets, all the vulgar dreams about the

Caucasus, disappeared, never to return. 'Now it has begun,' some solemn voice seemed to whisper to him. The distant line of the Terek, and the villages, and the people—all that appeared to him now in a serious light. He looked up at the sky—and remembered the mountains. He looked upon himself and his companion, John—again the mountains. There two Cossacks rode on horseback, their rifles, in cases, evenly moving on their backs, their horses intermingling their brown and grey legs—and again the mountains. . . . Beyond the Terek the smoke of a village was rising up—and the mountains? . . . The sun rose and gleamed in the waters of the Terek, appearing through the reeds—and the mountains. . . . From the Cossack village came a peasant cart. Women—handsome young women—moved about—but the mountains. . . . The Abreks* are scouring the steppes, and I travel without fear of them. I have a rifle and strength and youth—and the mountains!"

So enchanting were the mountains to Leo Tolstoy in his approach to Stary-Yurt.

* "Abreks" were young Circassians who were waging a sacred war against the Russian invaders. Their bravery was even recognised by their enemies, and the Russian poets Pushkin and Lermontoff sang their exploits.—*Translator*.

The great natural beauties of the Caucasus, the wild mountaineers, the no less wild Russians, the Cossacks of the Terek—all this new, or rather regenerating, condition of life had such a beneficial influence on Leo Tolstoy that he threw off, like a dirty shell, all the worldly, infected atmosphere of the life in Russia in which he had so nearly perished. And this regenerating and vivifying process awakened in him two great forces: religion and creative power. In his diary we find the following note on his religious awakening:

“I scarcely slept the whole of last night; after having written a little in my diary, I began to pray. I cannot express the feeling of bliss during that period. I repeated my usual prayers, ‘Our Father,’ ‘To the Virgin Mary,’ ‘To the Trinity,’ ‘The gates of Mercy,’ and ‘Appeal to the Guardian Angel,’ and then I still remained in prayer. If praying means to petition or to thank, I did not pray. I longed for something high and good, but what—I cannot convey, though I clearly felt, what I desired. I longed to be absorbed in the all-enfolding Being. I prayed Him to forgive my sins—but no, I did not ask that, because I felt that by giving me these blessed moments He had pardoned me. I prayed, and at the same time felt that I had nothing to ask for, that I could

not, and even did not know how to, ask. I thanked Him, but not with words or thoughts. In one feeling I united all—prayer and thankfulness. Every sense of fear had vanished. From this general feeling I could not distinguish faith, love, and hope. No; the feeling I experienced yesterday was love of God, the highest love, uniting in itself all that is good, rejecting all that is evil. How dreadful it was for me to consider the trivial, vicious side of life. I could not understand how it could have attracted me. With what a pure heart I prayed to God to accept me in his bosom. I did not feel my flesh, I was—no, the carnal, petty part again asserted itself, and in less than one hour I heard consciously the voice of sin, of vanity, and of the whole empty side of life. I knew whence this voice came, and that it had destroyed my bliss. I struggled, but yielded.

“I fell asleep dreaming of fame, of women; but that is not my fault—I could not help it.

“Eternal bliss is impossible on earth. Suffering is necessary. Why? I do not know. And how dare I say ‘I do not know’? How dared I think that the ways of Providence were known? But Providence is the origin of reason, and reason tries to understand. Reason is losing itself in the depth of wisdom, whilst emotion is afraid of

offending Him. I thank Him for the moments of bliss which showed me my insignificance and my greatness. I want to pray, but do not know how. I want to understand, but dare not. I resign myself to Thy will.

“Why have I written all this? How flat, how faded, and even senseless, appear my feelings when expressed; and yet they were so exalted.”

Such a moral awakening is described in “The Cossacks.” Olenin, the hero of this novel, seated within a beautiful forest of the Caucasus, gives himself up to thoughts on the meaning of life.

“Suddenly it was as if a new world had opened before him. ‘Happiness,’ he said to himself, ‘consists in living for others.’ And that is clear. The longing for happiness is inborn in man. This means that it is legitimate. Trying to satisfy it in a selfish way, by seeking wealth, fame, comforts of life, and love—it may be that circumstances will so shape themselves as to make it impossible to satisfy these desires. Consequently these desires are illegitimate, but the desire for happiness is not illegitimate. Which desires may be satisfied regardless of circumstances? Which? Love, self-sacrifice. . . .”

Leo Tolstoy spent the whole summer with his brother, taking part as a volunteer in expeditions

against the mountaineers. For the winter he went to Tiflis to pass his examination in order to enter the artillery service. In Tiflis he began to write his first novel, "Childhood."

After a successful examination he returned to his brother, wearing military uniform, and was appointed as a non-commissioned officer to the 4th battery of the 20th artillery brigade.

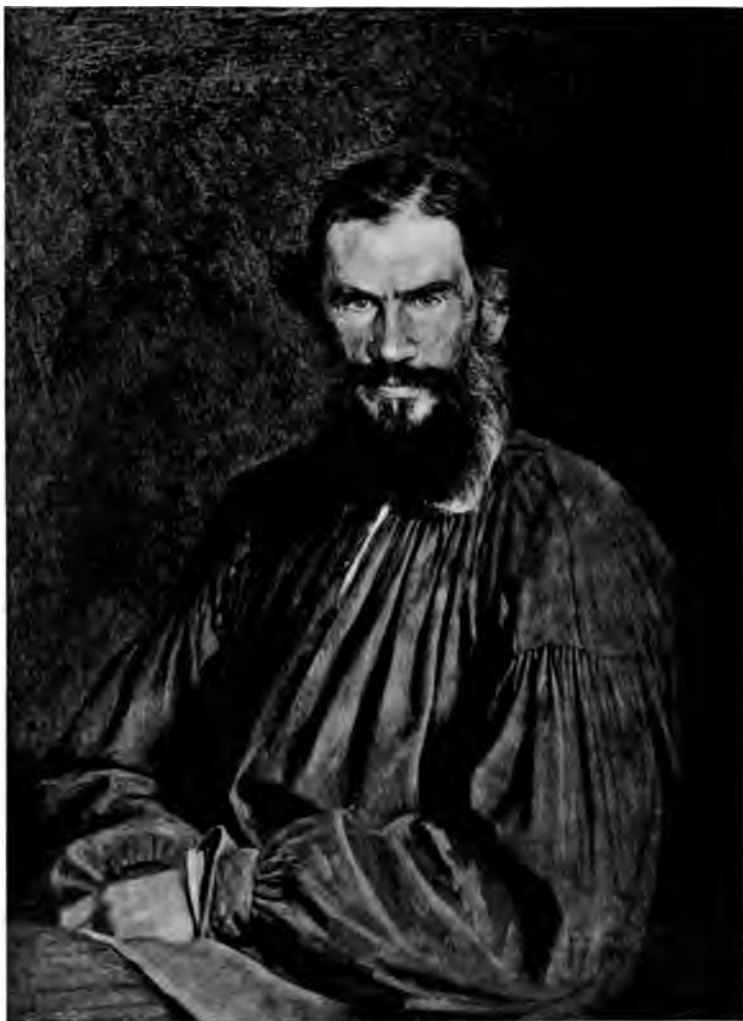
In July he finished the novel and, signing it modestly with the initials, "L. N. T.," sent it to the *Sovremennik*.^{*} Towards the end of August he received an answer from the editor, the poet N. Nekrasoff—who recognised talent in the unknown author—announcing that the novel would be published, and it duly appeared in the September number of the review, 1852.

This was the first step in the literary career of Leo Tolstoy, and from that time he realised that he had found his vocation. Shortly before the event he wrote in his diary:

"Something within me makes me think that I am not born to be as others."

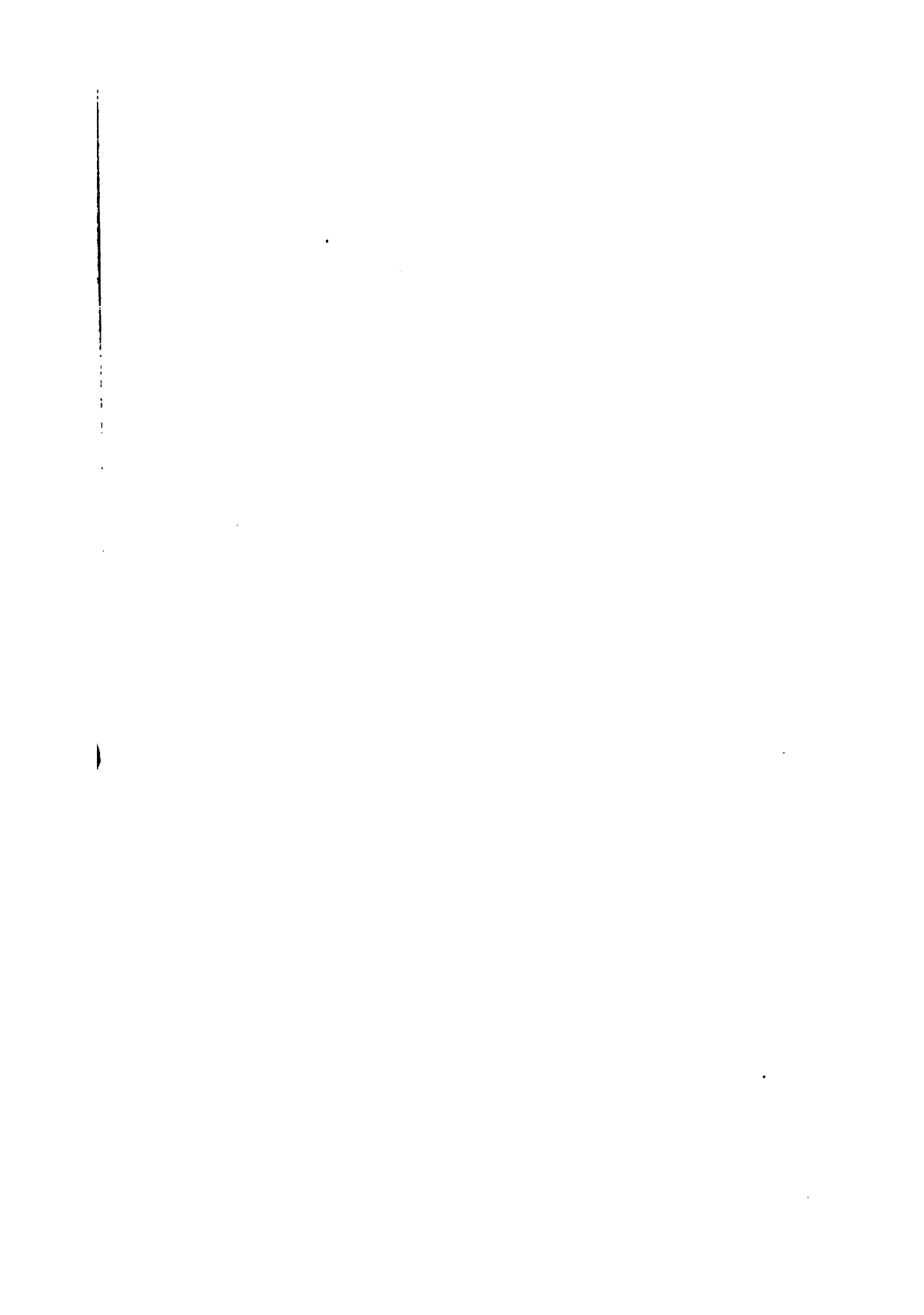
Yet at that time his inner consciousness vaguely

^{*} The "Contemporary"—a leading, advanced, St. Petersburg monthly review. Amongst its contributors were the best Russian authors of that time, such as Turgenev, Tchernohevsky, etc.—*Translator*.



Tolstoy in 1876.

From the Oil Painting by Kramskoy.



foretold him his future. A little later he writes in his diary :

“The man who strives only for his own happiness is bad ; he who aims for the good opinions of others is weak ; he who seeks the happiness of others is virtuous ; he whose aim is God is great.

“Justice is the least measure of virtue, and is obligatory for everybody. Higher is the striving for perfection ; anything lower is vice.”

It would be difficult to find a better expression of the views of Tolstoy.

Naturally, such a man was not in his place in the artillery of the Caucasus. Those moments of spiritual elevation were only a few bright spots on the grey background of the dreary camp routine. And, indeed, he began to grow tired and weary of military life. Then, towards the end of 1853, the Crimean War broke out. Just before Leo Tolstoy had handed in his resignation, but it was delayed, and through his influential relatives he requested to be transferred on active service to the Russian army on the Danube, where the fighting had begun. His relations procured him a post on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief of the Danube army, Prince Gorchakoff, who was also a relative.

Before his departure from the Caucasus,

Tolstoy passed his examination as an officer and obtained his promotion. With the Danube army he took part in the storming of Silistria, and in the retreat of the army. This retreat was devoid of interest for him, and he petitioned to be transferred to Sebastopol, where he arrived in November, 1854, and was appointed to the 3rd battery of the 14th artillery brigade. Here he was imbued at once with the intense patriotic enthusiasm of the famous defenders of Sebastopol. In one of his letters to his brother he wrote :

“ The spirit of the army is indescribable. Even in ancient Greece there was not so much heroism. Korniloff, when making the round of the troops, instead of saying, as usual, ‘ Good health to you, boys,’ said, ‘ We must die, my boys. Will you ? ’ And the soldiers shouted, ‘ We will die, your Excellency. Hurrah ! ’ And this was not affectation. On the face of each man it was plain that he meant it. Already 22,000 of them have kept their promise.”

Though Tolstoy did not take part in any important assaults and sorties, nevertheless his life was exposed to great danger. He was often on duty at the most dangerous points of the fourth bastion, and this danger he met always with unflinching courage.

In the officers' mess he cheered up everybody by his humour, and encouraged them by his gay energy. At one of those evenings he composed with his comrades the well-known verses beginning as follows :

“On the fourth of the month,
The devil sent us out
To capture the heights . . . ”

This song, in which, with good-natured humour, many commanding officers were ridiculed, was soon learnt and sung by the soldiers when off duty.

In the midst of the horrors of death, of incessant suspense for his own and others' lives, Tolstoy continued to ponder over man's destiny, the aim of life, and the eternal truths. In his diary we read, under the date of March 5th, 1855 :

“ A discussion on God and Faith brought me to a great, a stupendous idea, to the realisation of which I feel able to devote my life. The idea is to create a new religion corresponding to the development of mankind, a religion of Christ purified from dogma and mysticism, a practical religion, not promising bliss in future, but giving happiness on earth. I understand that this idea can be realised only by generations consciously working for that purpose. One generation will bequeath this idea to the next, and some day by fanaticism

or by reason it will be realised. To work consciously for the union of mankind by religion—that is the foundation of the idea which I hope will inspire me.”

The whole long and active life of Tolstoy up to his old age was but the endeavour to realise this great idea—the religious union of mankind.

But these thoughts were like flashes in the dark background of a dreadful tragedy: the mutual extermination of men—brothers—having no sentiment of personal hatred of each other.

The tragedy of war was described by Tolstoy with inimitable insight and the highest art in his sketches from Sebastopol. In August, 1855, Sebastopol capitulated, and the remnant of the Russian army dispersed to their homes.

Tolstoy was sent to St. Petersburg with the report on the last battle. He did not return to the army, and soon after left the military service.

CHAPTER IV

LITERARY, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY

ON arrival at St. Petersburg, Tolstoy was at once ^x received by the editors and the staff of contributors of the *Sovremennik* as one of themselves, for they highly appreciated his first literary work and his sketches from Sebastopol. But there was no affinity between him and this circle, and even with Turgenev, whom he respected most of all, he often quarrelled.

By his nature Tolstoy was quite unsuited to any collective action. Every collective initiative found in him a hot opponent. It was as if he feared to lose his independence or to be carried away by a general current of opinion in a direction which was not his own. This was the cause of all his misunderstandings and quarrels with his literary comrades.

Turgenev, who very much liked Tolstoy's first works, took a great interest in him; he even invited him to live with him in St. Petersburg. Fet, in his reminiscences, gives a comical description of

Turgenev, who quite changed his usual order of life to give greater comfort to his beloved guest, and even would speak in a subdued voice so as not to awaken the sleeping Tolstoy. Soon he discovered that this infant whom he had taken in charge had long ago outgrown its swaddling-clothes, stood on its own legs, and even began to attack. Turgenev then regretfully, but kindly, withdrew to a certain respectful distance, and at that distance he continued, during his whole life, to admire Tolstoy's talents and to criticise what he used to call his "eccentricities."

Of all the members of the staff of the *Sovremennik* Tolstoy entered into intimate friendly connections with the poet Fet only—an intimacy which lasted many years.

Tolstoy had resigned his commission in order to get out of military circles, which did not suit him. The resignation was accepted in November, 1856, and he immediately prepared for a foreign tour. Before his departure he went to Yasnaya Polyana, where he had some romantic entanglement. From letters to his relatives, it is clear that Tolstoy had for some time been preoccupied by the thought of his lonely, unsettled life. He was longing for the quiet harbour of family happiness, and suddenly he began to feel a tender attachment to Valérie

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Arsenef, the young daughter of a neighbouring nobleman. In order to test whether this sudden sentiment was not a mistake, he courageously separated himself from her and returned to St. Petersburg, whence he corresponded with the girl, whom he already regarded as his betrothed. These letters form quite a novel, in which a man desires to educate and prepare a young, inexperienced girl to become a good, loving wife, mistress, and mother. But their attachment was not strong enough to develop at such a distance. The letters began gradually to be cooler, and as soon as they realised that there was no true affection between them the correspondence ceased, and farewell letters were exchanged expressing mutual respect and restoring to each full liberty.

In January, 1857, Tolstoy started for Europe. He went by mail-coach to Warsaw, and thence by railway to Paris.*

In Paris he saw much of Turgenef, with whom he became more intimate. There, too, he had a trying experience. It seemed as if fate itself always led him into a situation where he had to protest against contemporary civilisation. He had gone

* At that time there existed only two lines in all Russia: that from St. Petersburg to Moscow, with a small branch from St. Petersburg to Tsarskoye Selo; and the route from Warsaw to Berlin.—*Translator.*

to Europe in order to learn—to see how the West was living, and whether he could not find something to adopt for his own country—when, shortly after his arrival in Paris, he witnessed an execution by guillotine.

“When I saw how the head was separated from the body,” he says in his “Confession,” “and as it dropped noisily into the basket, I understood, not with my reason but with my whole being, that no theories of the rationality of modern civilisation and its institutions could justify this act; that if all the people in the world, from the very beginning of the world, by whatever theory, had found it necessary, I knew that it was useless, that it was evil. I knew, also, that the standard of good and evil was not what people said or did, not progress, but myself and my own heart.”

The day after the execution he wrote in his diary :

“I got up before seven and went to see the execution. A thick, white, and healthy neck and chest; he kissed the New Testament, and then death. What nonsense! It made a strong impression which has not been in vain. I am not a political man. Morality and Art I know, I love. . . . The guillotine prevented me a long time from sleeping, and made me start often.”



Tolstoy at work at Yasnaya Polyana.

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In the beginning of May he left Paris for Switzerland, where he settled at Clarens on the Lake of Geneva. He rested here after the Paris bustle, and was delighted with the beauty of nature.

These are his travelling impressions :

“The 15th of May the weather was bright ; the shining blue—dark blue—lake, dotted with its white and dark spots of sails and boats, lay glittering nearly three sides around me. Towards Geneva, far over the lake, the hot air was vibrating and darkening ; on the other side rose abruptly the green Savoy mountains, with little, white houses at their foot, and the jagged rocks, one of which resembled a giant white woman in an old-fashioned costume. On the left, clearly outlined just above the brownish vineyards, in the deep green of orchards, Montreux appeared, with its graceful church rising from the slope of the mountain. Along the very border of the lake the houses of Villeneuve are spread out, their metallic roofs shining in the midday sun ; the mysterious valley of the Rhone, with mountains rising one above the other ; white, cold Chillon on the brink of the water, the much-sung islet, artificial, but lying, nevertheless, charmingly opposite Villeneuve.

“The lake rippled slightly. The sun struck ver-

tically on its azure surface ; and the outspread sails, scattered about the lake, appeared motionless.

“It is wonderful ! I lived in Clarens two full months, and every time at morning, but especially towards evening, that I opened the shutters of my windows, then already in the shade, looking on the lake and on the distant mountains reflected in the water, the beauty blinded me and acted instantly on me with unexpected strength. I felt a sudden desire to love, even myself. I regretted the past, was hopeful for the future. Life appeared joyous, and I wished to live long, very long ; and the idea of death began to assume a childish, poetic terror. Sometimes, sitting alone in the little, shady garden, and gazing, gazing on the lake and its shores, I seemed to feel the physical sensation as of beauty pouring through my eyes into my soul.”

Having fully enjoyed the loveliness of the Lake of Geneva, Tolstoy set forth to see more of the country. At first he walked through the mountains ; afterwards he crossed the Oberland on horseback to Lucerne, that wonderful corner of Switzerland, establishing himself at the best hotel, the Schweizerhof, then crowded with tourists, mostly English.

Full of charming impressions of the Swiss mountains and nature, he could not bear the

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striking contrast between the freedom of the wilds and the artificial affectedness of the English, for whose pleasure the beautiful shore of the Lucerne lake had been transformed into a stone quay in full accord with the cold nature of that race. At the moment of Tolstoy's arrival, these people were looking with contempt on a little, begging street minstrel, who did not receive anything from them for his sweet singing.

At the table d'hôte Tolstoy created a sensation by inviting this street singer to dine with him, to the great horror of the Englishmen and the solemn waiters. This incident is described in Tolstoy's novelette, "Lucerne," which ends in a beautiful hymn to the Eternal One :

"Who has weighed the internal happiness which lies in the soul of each of these men ? There he sits now, somewhere on a dirty threshold, gazing on the bright, moonlit sky and joyfully singing to the quiet, fragrant night ; there is no reproach, no anger or regret in his soul. And who knows what is passing in the hearts of those people behind these rich and lofty walls ? Who knows whether they possess as careless and serene a joy of life and harmony with the world as lie in the heart of this little man ? Unlimited are the mercy and wisdom of Him who permitted and ordered the existence

of these contradictions. Only to thee, worthless worm, impudently, lawlessly trying to penetrate His laws, His intentions, only to thee they appear as contradictions. He tenderly looks down from His bright, immeasurable heights, and enjoys the endless harmony in which ye all in your contradictions are eternally moving. In your pride ye thought to evade the universal law. Nay, thou, with thy petty, vulgar contempt for the waiters, thou also respondest to the harmonious necessity of the eternal and endless."

From Lucerne Tolstoy returned to Russia through Germany, and in August he reached Yasnaya Polyana. There he intended to occupy himself with the estate and to open a school, but for that winter the whole family went to Moscow.

In December of the same year Tolstoy, with his friend, Fet, went bear-hunting on the estate of their mutual friend Gromeka, in the Tver province. This amusement nearly cost Tolstoy his life. When, on one occasion, a she-bear had been driven out of her lair and came towards Tolstoy, he fired and missed. The bear threw him to the ground, fell on top of him, and had her jaws already open to seize his head, when his friends, rushing forward, drove her away

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and killed her. However, she had succeeded in biting Tolstoy, and had torn off a piece of skin. He was bandaged on the spot, and the wound soon healed. He described this incident in a story called "The Wish is Stronger than Bondage," published in school reading-books.

During the winter in Moscow he was giving much time to gymnastics, which at that period began to be fashionable in Russia. These physical exercises he continued also in Yasnaya Polyana.

Here we give a humorous description, by his brother Nicolas, of these gymnastics :

"Leo desires to take up all, not to miss anything—not even gymnastics. Now he has erected a bar outside his window. Of course, if we put aside prejudice, against which he is always fighting, he is quite right: gymnastics do not interfere with the management of the estate. But the bailiff looks somewhat differently on the matter. 'I come to the master,' he says, 'to get orders, and the master, in a short red jacket, swings with one leg over the bar, head down, his face red, hair hanging down and flying about. I wonder, must I wait for orders or look at him!'"

These practices did not interfere with his management. Already at that time, in the summer, he was working in the fields, ploughing,

mowing grass, giving a poetic glamour to this work.

In the autumn he again went to Moscow, and lived a gay, society life. In all literary circles he was welcome, and in February, 1859, he was elected member of the Moscow Literary Society. According to the rules of that body, a newly-elected member had to make his inaugural speech at a general meeting. Tolstoy duly delivered his address, but the record of it has not been preserved. The subject was, "The Superiority of the Element of Art in Literature above all Temporary Tendencies."

The president of the society, A. Khomyakoff, in his reply, expressed sympathy with Tolstoy's words, but remarked that literary art does not exclude the contemporary and the casual, quoting, as an example, Tolstoy's own novel, "Three Deaths," just published, in which work, as in many others, the temporary is united with the eternal.

"Continue with the same, if possible even greater, success," concluded Khomyakoff, in his reply to Tolstoy. "Your talent is not transitory and easily exhausted ; but remember that in letters the eternal and artistic constantly assimilate the temporary and transient, remodelling and ennobling

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it, and all the various aspects of human thought are incessantly uniting in one harmonious whole.”

The influence and power of Leo Tolstoy in Russian life was constantly growing. But many trying experiences awaited him yet before he reached his full development.

CHAPTER V

THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER NICOLAS

IN the beginning of 1860 Tolstoy was very much alarmed by the failing health of his elder brother Nicolas. The doctors suspected consumption, and advised him to go for a cure at Soden, where he went next summer, accompanied by his brother Sergius. His illness caused great anxiety to many friends, Fet and Turgenev amongst them, who were attached to Nicolas and held him in high esteem. Turgenev wrote :

“ Your news about the illness of Nicolas Tolstoy has deeply grieved me. Is it possible that this dear and lovable man must perish ? And how did it happen that this illness was allowed to develop ? Can he not overcome his indolence and go abroad for a cure ? Was he not travelling in the Caucasus by coach, and the devil knows in what other ways ? Let him come to Soden ! One meets here, at every step, consumptives. It seems that the waters of Soden are the best cure for such illness. I am writing to you from two thousand

DEATH OF HIS BROTHER NICOLAS 51

versts distance, as if my word could be of any help. . . . If he has not yet started, he never will. . . . That is how Fate breaks all of us."

At first Soden seemed to do Nicolas good, but later the news became less and less comforting. Then, in order to take the place of his brother Sergius, Tolstoy went to Soden with his married sister, Marie, and her two little daughters.

They travelled by steamer from St. Petersburg to Stettin, and from there by Berlin to Soden. The sister went straight to Soden, but Tolstoy stayed a few days in Berlin to see the town, and attended a few lectures of the famous professors Dubois-Raymond, Dreusen, and others. Afterwards he visited Dresden and the well-known novelist Auerbach, who was very much respected by Tolstoy for his sketches of popular life. But especially, wherever he got the chance, Tolstoy visited schools. The idea to start a school of his own had already taken deep root in his mind, and he never missed an opportunity in Europe to study elementary education and to visit schools. But German schools did not satisfy him. In his diary he gives the following impression of the Saxon schools :

"I was in a school. Awful. Prayer for the

King ; thrashings ; all is learnt by heart. Frightened and unnatural children.”

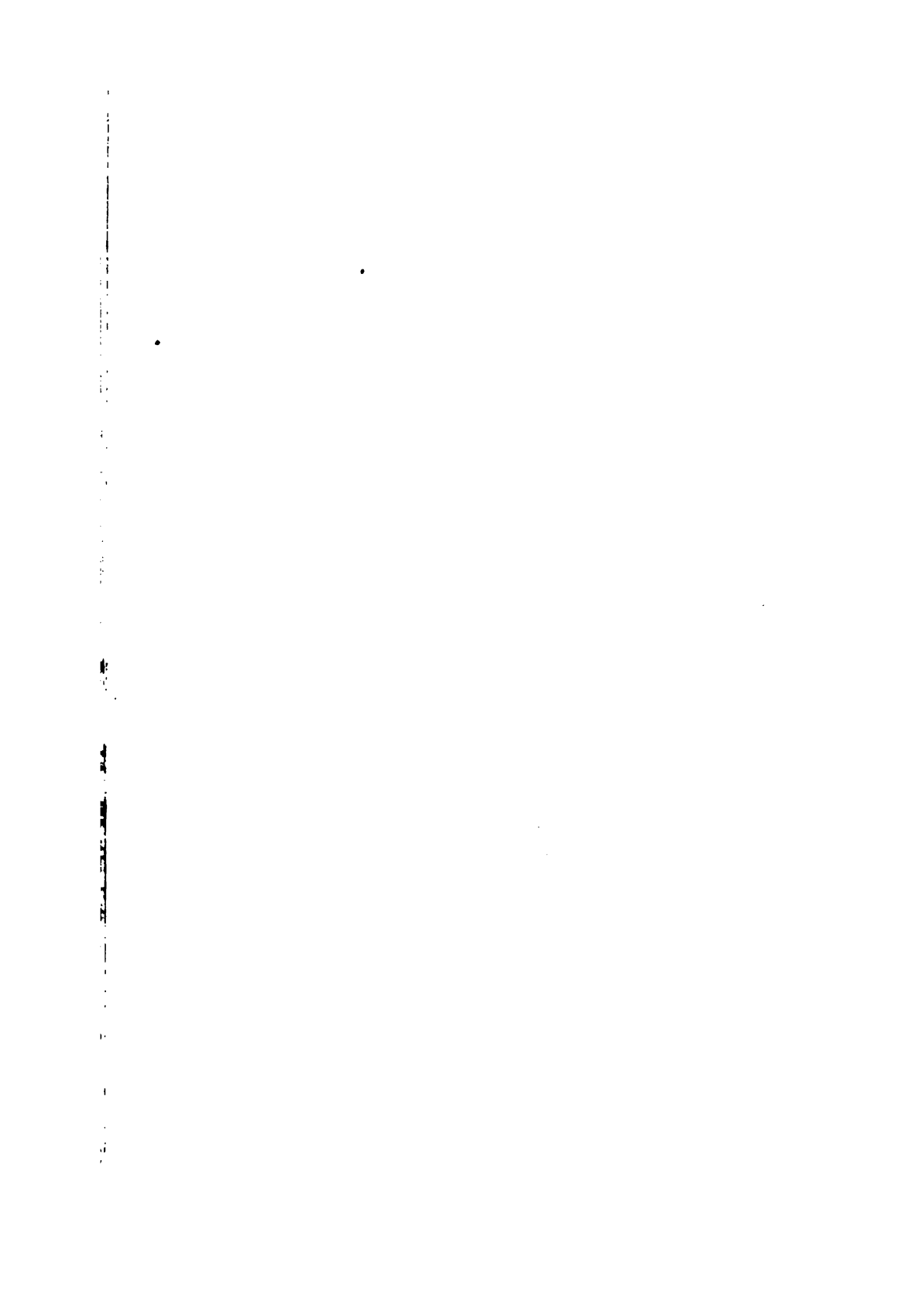
At the same time Tolstoy gave a good deal of his time to the reading of philosophical, historical, and educational works of the best known authors of that time : Riehl, Fröbel, Diesterweg, and others.

At last he reached Soden, where he found his beloved brother Nicolas in a very bad state of health. They hurried to the south of France to lengthen his life as much as possible, settling at Hyères, by the seaside, in that mild, beautiful climate. But it was too late. On September 20th, 1860, Nicolas died in Leo's arms. This death made a strong, ineffaceable impression on Tolstoy, and gave a new direction to his thoughts. Writing to his friend Fet on the death of his brother, he says :

“He was quite right in saying that there is nothing worse than death. Considering that death is the end of all, life in that case appears worse than anything. What is the use of striving and struggling if from what was Nicolas Tolstoy nothing remained for himself ? He did not say that he felt the approach of death, but I know that he watched every step of it, and that he knew for certain what was left to him. A few moments



Tolstoy in 1895.



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before the end he slumbered, and suddenly awoke and whispered in terror, 'What is that?' He saw Death, and he felt himself swallowed up in the darkness. And if he found nothing to cling to, what shall I find? Yet less. Certainly, neither I nor anybody else will struggle to the last moment as he did."

And he continues, farther on :

"All who watched his last moments, say, 'How wonderfully quiet and peaceful was his death'; but I know how terribly painful it was to him, as not a single one of his feelings was hidden from me. Hundreds of times I say to myself, 'Let the dead bury the dead,' but in some way one has to spend one's remaining strength. You cannot bid a stone fall up and not downwards, where there is attraction. You cannot laugh at a worn-out joke. You cannot eat when you are not hungry. Is it worth while to trouble when tomorrow may begin the agony of death with its detestable lies and self-delusion, and when all ends in nothingness, naught for myself. Curious thing! 'Be useful, be virtuous, happy as long as you live,' people say to others. But usefulness, morality, and happiness are all united in truth. The truth I found after thirty-two years of life is that the condition of our existence is dreadful.

“‘Take life as it is,’ they say. ‘You have put yourself in that condition.’ Well, I take life as I find it; but when man reaches the highest degree of development he sees that all is nonsense, fraud, and that truth, which he nevertheless loves above all, is terrible. When he comes to see this thoroughly and clearly, he starts up and exclaims with terror, like my brother: ‘What is that?’ Certainly while there exists the desire to know and speak the truth, one endeavours to do so. This is the only thing I preserved from all moral conceptions, and higher I cannot rise. This only I will do in future, but not in the form of your art. Art is a lie, and I can no longer love a beautiful lie.”

Recovering somewhat from this heavy blow, Leo Tolstoy continued his foreign tour, studying the systems of elementary education in France, Germany, and England. In London he made the acquaintance of Herzen,* and spent with him a whole month in most friendly intimacy.

* Alexander Herzen, a brilliant political author and philosopher, was the first Russian political refugee in London, where he started the *Russian Free Press*. An intimate friend of Mazzini, Proudhon, Kossuth, and others, he was well known also in English political and literary circles. His influence on Russian life is unsurpassed.
—Translator.

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February 19th, 1861, the day of the liberation of the serfs, had arrived. Tolstoy hurried back to Russia, having been appointed a "Mediator" between the peasants and the nobility of his province.

As a Mediator, Tolstoy took at once the side of the peasants, defending their interests against their former masters, who reluctantly obeyed their monarch's will, and tried by every means to cheat the former serfs. Naturally, by acting thus, Tolstoy provoked quite a storm of anger amongst the nobility. Secret denunciations were pouring into the central government, and his position became untenable, so that in less than a year he was obliged to tender his resignation. With his whole heart he then devoted himself to the problem of elementary education.

Just at that time, in 1861, he had the misfortune to quarrel seriously with Turgenev. Their mutual friend, Fet, in his "Memoirs," gives this episode in detail. The quarrel broke out in his house, when Turgenev and Tolstoy were his guests. The insignificance of the cause—the question of the education of Turgenev's daughter—shows clearly that this was only the outbreak of a long-standing, hidden, mutual disagreement. Only the noble

character of both men prevented a fatal ending to the quarrel. A challenge was sent, but happily the duel did not take place. Only with time, however, was the breach gradually healed.*

* Turgenev, on his death-bed in Paris, in 1883, wrote to Tolstoy a touching letter, in which, calling him a great author, he begged Tolstoy to continue the literary work, which at that time the latter, in one of his moral crises, intended to abandon.—*Translator*.

CHAPTER VI

TOLSTOY'S EDUCATIONAL WORK

THE educational activity of Tolstoy forms quite a separate period in his life. The value of this activity for the advancement of popular Russian instruction has till now not been sufficiently appreciated. Teaching always attracted him. As far back as 1849, on his return from Kazan, he opened a little school on his estate. But during his stay in the Caucasus and the following eventful years the school was closed. He reopened it during the winter of 1858-59, after his first journey in Europe; but somehow it was not a success.

As we have seen, during his second journey in Europe he seriously studied the subject. Now, armed with knowledge and experience, he once again took his school in hand, and this time he carried out his intention, establishing a model for the regeneration of the Russian elementary school.

In Yasnaya Polyana he organised quite an educational circle of young teachers, amongst them a German, Herr Keller, whom he

had expressly engaged from Germany. Tolstoy opened several schools, published an educational review, *Yasnaya Polyana*, in which he expounded his theories upon instruction, gave accounts of his own work as a teacher in elementary schools, attracted the teachers of neighbouring schools to collaborate in his paper, and published their essays and reports. As supplements to his review, he gave model, popular reading-books, under the general title, "From *Yasnaya Polyana*"; they contained a whole series of masterly, popular sketches from history, geography, biography, and general literature, written by the teachers and even by the pupils, under his supervision. The quintessence of his theory on education Tolstoy developed in four articles in his review. In the first of these articles, "On Popular Instruction," he explained that the greatest impediments to the development of popular instruction are preconceived theories and their arbitrary imposition on the people without examining the people's needs or the suitability of the theories to those needs. In conclusion of his argument he states that the sole educational method must be experience freed from preconceived ideas, whilst the only guide must be liberty, as without it no experiment of any value can be accomplished.

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To these free experiments Tolstoy devoted himself in his own school at Yasnaya Polyana, as well as in the other schools created by him, whilst his review remained the organ of his theories. Though the review existed only a year, it contained a most interesting account of Tolstoy's experiences.

In the second article Tolstoy asserted that reading and writing are not the first step, and consequently not the most important step, in education. There are many illiterate people with experience, and much useful, and even technical, knowledge; whilst on the other hand there are literate men who do not possess any of those qualities. The schools created by the Government and the intellectual classes are not meant to serve the immediate needs of popular life, and not adapted to them. The elementary schools are created for the purpose of preparing the pupils for a secondary school. The latter prepares the pupils for the high school, which existed before either of the first two. The high schools are the continuation of the former monastic schools, serving a Church and State purpose. Liberated now from the Church, and in Russia simply divided into clerical and lay schools, the high, secondary and elementary schools continue to serve the State ends, but not the people.

Concerning the ways of teaching, Tolstoy finds that method best which requires the least effort from the child; but he considers the principal requirements in teaching are individual talent and art in the teacher. Teaching is an art; its development and improvement have no limits, but perfection is unattainable.

In his third article, "Education and Instruction," Tolstoy draws a sharp line between the two. Education is more or less an enforcement of our will on the child; instruction leaves it comparatively free. For the first he finds no sufficient justification. "There exist no rights to educate. I do not recognise it. Nowhere and never have the young generation recognised, nor will they recognise it; that is why they are always in revolt against the compulsion of education."

If, to a certain degree, the compulsion of family and religious education can be justified and explained, Tolstoy cannot find a reason for the compulsion of education by the State, and he arrives at the following conclusion:

"We do not pay attention to the voice of the people. We do not hear it even, because it does not speak in the Press or from the platform; nevertheless the people are against this education."



Photo. Hertz.

Tolstoy on the road from Moscow to Yasnaya Polyana.

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From this point of view he severely and pitilessly examines the school system. Although his article was written half a century ago, many of his observations have their full value even at the present time.

His trenchant articles did not fail to provoke replies and criticisms in other reviews. To one of these replies, that of Eugene Markoff, Tolstoy wrote a strong and powerful defence, "Progress and Instruction." Seeing that the principal argument in defence of the present system of education is belief in progress, Tolstoy applies himself to uproot this belief by proving the insignificance and the conventionality of the idea of "progress." He points out that the greater part of humanity, the hundreds of millions of Eastern people, are quite without this idea.

Tolstoy analysed in his review, *Yasnaya Polyana*, the Ministerial project of organisation of popular schools, and showed its unfitness for Russian life, based as it was on the American system of school taxes. Altogether, he found that the project was not adaptable to popular needs, and that the regulations of popular instruction proposed in the project represented a drawback to the existence and expansion of free education.

All these educational views were applied by

him with the energy of a genius in his school at Yasnaya Polyana. This school was described in the following words in his review :

“The school occupies a two-storied brick building. Two rooms are used as classrooms, two for the teachers, and one as a physical cabinet. In the porch hangs a bell with a rope attached to it ; in the entrance-hall, downstairs, parallel and horizontal bars are erected ; whilst in the vestibule, upstairs, stands a carpenter’s bench. The staircase and entrance-hall are covered with footmarks of snow and dirt. In the hall also hangs the programme. The order of the lessons is as follows : At eight o’clock in the morning the teacher living in the school, who is its administrator and very orderly, sends one of the boys who is sleeping in the school to ring the school-bell.

“Villagers are early risers, and for a long time the lights in the peasants’ cottages have been visible from the school. Half an hour after the ringing of the bell, through the mist or rain, or in the slanting rays of the autumn sun, little dark figures appear separately or in pairs on the slopes of the hollow which divides the school from the village. They are not waiting for each other as formerly. The sentiment to herd together has

disappeared long ago. They have learnt something already, and for that reason they are more independent. They do not bring anything with them: no books, no copy-books; they have no home-lessons to do. Not only do they carry nothing in their hands, but neither are their heads burdened. The little scholar is not obliged to remember any lesson, not even what he learnt yesterday. He is not tortured by the thought of a coming task. He only brings himself, his impressionable nature, and the conviction that to-day it will be just as gay at school as yesterday. He does not think of a lesson before it begins. Nobody is reprimanded for being late; but they are never late, except when the fathers keep the elder boys for some work; and as soon as they are free they run as fast as possible to school."

Such was the organisation of the school; but its internal life, the mutual relations between Tolstoy and the pupils, the budding of their imagination, their analysis by their common-sense of the existing routine of teaching—all this is of incomparably greater interest, and Tolstoy described it in some artistic sketches in his review.*

* Tolstoy's principal articles on education were published in the fourth volume of his complete works.—*Author*.

In the spring of 1862, Tolstoy felt exhausted by his labour as teacher, editor, Mediator, and many other occupations to which, with his impulsive nature, he devoted himself always so wholeheartedly. He began to be unwell, to cough, and the doctors ordered him to go for some time to the steppes to follow a Kumiss* cure. In the month of May he started, accompanied by two boys from his school. The air and nature of the steppes, combined with the invigorating influence of the Kumiss, soon restored his health.

During his absence from Yasnaya Polyana an absurd, though revolting, incident occurred. By the anonymous denunciation of a half-literate spy, Yasnaya Polyana was searched by the police. Ridiculous and outrageous as was the search, the authorities who carried it out made it worse by their usual brutality, which caused the greatest commotion amongst the peaceful inhabitants of Yasnaya Polyana, the aunt and sister of Tolstoy being especially alarmed. Of course, the authorities did not find anything incriminating. The quiet order of life at Yasnaya Polyana, however, was so disturbed that it required great efforts to re-establish tranquillity; but even then it was of short duration, and the school was closed.

* Fermented mare's milk.—*Translator.*

Although he appeared quite absorbed by educational work, this sphere of activity could not fully satisfy Tolstoy. He was seeking truth—the highest truth—which he could not find. From time to time this struggle for truth became a great, nervous strain. In his "Confession" Tolstoy characterised his state of mind at that time in the following words:

"In the year of the peasants' emancipation I returned to Russia, and taking the post of 'Mediator,' I began to teach illiterate people in the schools and the educated people in the review which I began to publish. The work seemed to go well, but I felt that my mind was not in a normal state, and that a change had to come. Probably already at that time I would have reached that despair in which I was plunged fifteen years later, if there had not existed yet one side of life which hitherto I had never tried, and which promised me salvation—family life.

"During a whole year I was busy as Mediator, with my schools and review, and I was so terribly exhausted, especially because my work had become much involved. My work as a Mediator was one continuous struggle; my educational activity had become more and more vague; my shifts in my own review were so odious, as they

consisted in reality of the desire to teach everybody and to hide that I did not know what to teach, that I felt ill rather morally than physically.

✓ I left everything and went to the steppes—to the Bashkirs—to breathe the air, to drink Kumiss, and to live an animal's life. Returning from there, I married.”

Tolstoy's marriage took place in the most auspicious circumstances. He had already been a long time acquainted with the family of the Court physician Behrs, living in the Kremlin at Moscow. He had known his future wife and her sisters from their childhood, and they had grown up under his eyes.

Passionately in love with the younger sister Sophia, as if afraid of his already mature age, he hurried on the marriage. On 17th September, 1862, he proposed, and on the 23rd of that month was married. After the marriage the young couple went to Yasnaya Polyana, where they were welcomed by the loving aunt and Leo's brother, Sergius. From that date a new and serious period of life began for Tolstoy. He was thirty-four years of age, and his young wife eighteen.

CHAPTER VII

THE EARLY DAYS OF MARRIED LIFE

DURING the first period of his married life Tolstoy's days were filled with domestic happiness. In a letter to his friend, Fet, he says : "I am married and happy ; I am a new—quite a new—man." But his rapturous delight did not interfere with his literary work. He completed the first part of "The Cossacks"—the second part of which, unhappily, he never finished—and, at the same period, prepared and published a sketch called *Polikushka*. Tolstoy himself, in a letter to Fet, gives the following opinion of these works :

"I live in a world so far away from literature and critics that on receiving a letter like yours my first sentiment is astonishment. Who wrote 'The Cossacks' and *Polikushka*? And what may be said on their account? Paper is patient, and the publisher pays for and prints everything. But that is only the first impression. When I begin to look into the meaning of the words and to search my mind, somewhere, in a corner amongst

old, forgotten rubbish, I find a vague feeling which may be called artistic. Comparing this with what you say, I admit that you are right, and even I find pleasure in rummaging among such old rubbish and memories instinct with the fragrance of the past, once so dear to me. Even the desire to write is awakened. Certainly you are right. But readers like you are few. *Polikushka* is gossip about the first subject to hand by a man who knows how to handle a pen; 'The Cossacks' has more vitality, though also rather poor work. I am now writing the story of a horse, which I hope to publish in the autumn."

* His creative energy soon reasserted itself, and he conceived the idea of a gigantic work. His attention was drawn to the remarkable epoch of the Decembrists,* and he desired to represent it in an artistic form. The results of the preliminary work were fragments published in the complete edition of his works. Studying that historic period, he did not neglect to examine the causes of the events he wished to describe, and the whole period of the Napoleonic wars unfolded itself before him. Impassioned by his subject, he gave himself up to it with the whole strength of his

* The constitutional attempt of 14th December, 1825, in which the best families of the nobility were involved.—*Translator*.



Countess Tolstoy.

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genius. The great work, "War and Peace," gradually evolved. There were many difficulties and obstacles, but he overcame them by the power of his genius, now aroused to full activity. From letters to his friends we see the various stages through which the work passed to its completion:

"I am in a very anxious state of mind. I am writing nothing, though working hard. You cannot imagine how difficult for me is the preliminary work of ploughing deeply the field where I must sow. I must think, and think again, over what may happen to all the personages of my future large work, and to consider millions of possible combinations, and choose from them the millionth part. It is extremely difficult. That is what I am occupied with."

In a later letter to Fet he writes:

"This autumn I made enough progress with my novel. *Ars longa, vita brevis*. I am thinking every day. If one could do the one hundredth part of what one intends! But, in reality, only one millionth part is accomplished. Nevertheless, the conviction that he can write brings happiness to the author. You know this feeling. This year I feel it stronger than ever."

At the very height of this period of hard work,

Tolstoy, whilst hunting, was thrown by his horse and broke his right arm. Rendered unconscious by the pain, he found, on regaining his senses, that his horse had run away. Though suffering greatly, he crept to the high road, where he lay down until some passers-by conveyed him home on a cart. It is difficult to imagine such a tragic picture: the future creator of "War and Peace" lying helpless, with a broken arm, on the high road, waiting to be picked up by a chance passer-by.

Deprived for a while of the use of his right hand, Tolstoy continued his work by dictating to his sister-in-law. He was also obliged to separate himself temporarily from his family, as the treatment for his arm obliged him to go to Moscow. Already, after a month, he writes jokingly to Fet:

"I must tell you something surprising about myself. When the horse threw me and broke my arm, upon regaining consciousness, I said to myself, 'I am a literary man.' Yes, I am a literary man, but in seclusion and hiding. In a few days the first instalment of the first volume of '1815' will appear. Please write me your opinion in detail. Yours, and that of a man whom I love more and more with advancing years (Turgenev) are dear to me. He will understand. What I wrote previously I consider only as a trial of my pen.

Although I like what I am publishing now better than former writings, nevertheless this also seems uninteresting, as the beginning of a book sometimes is. But that which will follow——!”

From this letter it is clear how, through the modesty of genius, his indomitable creative power asserted itself and his plans developed.

“1815” was the original title of “War and Peace.” Studying that epoch, he worked among the historical and military archives, interviewed survivors of that period, visited the battlefield of Borodino, and was so transported with joy by the picture flashing before his imagination that he wrote to his wife :

“If God grants health and peace, I shall give such a picture of the battle of Borodino as has never yet been done.”

The work absorbed him entirely, and when he was especially satisfied with his writing he used to say to his family :

“To-day I left a bit of my life in my ink-pot.”

This great work occupied six whole years—from 1863 to 1869. The critics did not at once appreciate its value. They were staggered. Liberal critics, not understanding its meaning and artistic beauties, accused Tolstoy of reactionary views—of preaching the philosophy of stagnation, etc. On

the other hand, the conservative critics saw in the description of battles only patriotic tendencies; and even so refined an author as Turgenev, and a literary connoisseur and friend like Botkin, were not immediately captured by "War and Peace." But if the victory gained by this work was slow it was all the more complete, its influence increasing by degrees as successive instalments appeared.

*

The writer considers "War and Peace" to be the highest development of Tolstoy's artistic creative power, and therefore purposes to dwell a little longer on this work, which nearly approaches perfection. The descriptions of nature, of the movement of crowds, the fine moral analysis—all these are intermingled in exquisite harmony and proportion. The terrible collision of army corps, the streets of noisy towns, the country houses of the nobility, with their surrounding villages, the drawing-rooms of high society, the nursery of a happy mother, the romantic intrigues of loving young people, the execution of a military prisoner, the psychology of the crowd, and the smallest detail of the suffering soul of the hero, the snow-covered plains of Russia, and the silent field of Austerlitz, covered with corpses and abandoned wounded, with the all-forgiving, starry sky overhead—all these are described with a simplicity and truth

never till then attained by any master of literature nor ever likely to be surpassed.

The two heroes, Prince Andrew and Pierre Bezukhoff, deserve special attention. They are the incarnation of the two sides of Tolstoy's nature, so inclined to analysis and scepticism. When he wrote "War and Peace" he had not achieved that great synthesis of reason and love which later inspired all his works. Prince Andrew and Pierre represent the two forces always at strife in Tolstoy's own soul: cold reason and invincible idealism. The truth was lying on the distant crossing point of those two lines, where reason became the highest reason and idealism was transformed into love.

In the artistic portion of the novel, Tolstoy has interwoven his own idea with the philosophy of history, which he expounded more fully in a special article :

"A few words on 'War and Peace.' The point of greatest interest for me is the insignificant rôle played in the development of historical events by the so-called great men. Studying the highly tragic period of the Napoleonic wars, so crowded with great events, so recent, on which such varied traditions are preserved, I come to the definite conclusion that the causes of historical events are concealed from our reason.

“ Such an event as that when millions of people fought each other, half a million of whom were actually killed, could not have been caused by the will of one man. Just as it is impossible for one man to undermine a mountain, so is it impossible for one man to force five hundred thousand persons to lay down their lives.”

The laws of human life are compared by Tolstoy with a stencil plate, and human desires, strivings, and acts to the colours which are carelessly painted over the plate. Thanks to the stencil plate, in spite of a carelessly handled brush, we procure a correct design, because the paint does not show wherever we happen to apply it, but only at those parts reached through the pattern cut in the plate. So, from the thousands of our inco-ordinate desires, only those are realised which correspond with the open spaces in some great stencil plate of life.

The most active period of Tolstoy's life was the 'sixties. Despite his great literary work, he did not neglect his social duties. He occupied himself with the estate, spent part of his time with his family, hunted, and so forth. In 1866 he appeared as the defender of the soldier, Shibunin, who, for striking his officer, was condemned to death by the military tribunal. Tolstoy's defence was not

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successful: he could not save Shibunin, who was shot. But this event, according to his own words, did not pass without its due effect upon Tolstoy :

“ I vaguely felt, even then,” he recently wrote in a letter, “ that capital punishment, this pre-meditated murder, is in direct contradiction to that Christian law which we, so to speak, confess, and destroys every possibility of a rational life as well as any morality, because it is evident that if one person or a committee of men can decide that it is necessary to kill one or more persons, there is no reason why one or more such persons should not find equal necessity for killing other people.”

Further analysing the vindication by science or by the Church of capital punishment, he concludes :

“ Yes, this case had a great and beneficial influence on me. On that occasion, for the first time, I felt two things : that violence pre-supposes murder or threats of it for its accomplishment, and that therefore all violence is inevitably connected with murder ; secondly, that a State organisation is inconceivable without murder, and consequently cannot accord with Christianity.”

At the same period of life, some of Tolstoy's

later social ideas were conceived. In his note book of 1865 we find the following interesting observations :

“The historical mission of Russia consists in bringing before the world the idea of the socialisation of land.

“ ‘ *La propriété c'est le vol* ’ will remain a greater truth for humanity than that of the English constitution. It is an absolute truth, but there are relative truths as the outcome of its application. The first of these relative truths is the conception of property by the Russian people. The Russian people decry private ownership in land, which is the most fundamental form of property, least of all an outcome of work, and, more than any, barring the acquisition of property by other people. This is not a dream; it is a fact realised by the Russian peasants' communes and those of the Cossacks. This truth is equally well understood by the educated Russian and the peasant who says, ‘ Let the Government inscribe us as Cossacks, and the land will be free for us all.’ This idea has a future, and on it only a Russian revolution may be based. Such a revolution will not be directed against the Tsar and despotism, but against private ownership in land, and the people will say ‘ Take from each what you like, but leave us the

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land.' Absolutism does not interfere with, but rather favours, this order of things."

These are the germs of ideas developed by Tolstoy so powerfully in his later works. Already we see here the beginning of his sympathy with Henry George's idea of land nationalisation by the Single Tax system, which Tolstoy defended till his death.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ANNA KARENIN PERIOD

TOWARDS the end of the 'sixties, when Tolstoy had finished his "War and Peace," he was brooding over new projects of popular instruction, interrupted, as we saw, in 1862. As usual, he threw his whole energy into the work, and published his well-known reading-book for beginners. Again he created a model school, collected teachers around him, took an active part in the proceedings of the Moscow Committee for the Promotion of Primary Instruction, and published an article "On Popular Instruction" in a St. Petersburg radical monthly review, *Annals of the Fatherland*—an article which aroused quite a storm in the educational and literary world.

Surveying with a sharp and pitiless eye the existing system of popular instruction, with new arguments he vindicated free schools, as he had done before in his review, *Yasnaya Polyana*. Tolstoy's views were heatedly discussed in the periodicals of that time and in educational circles.

An ardent partisan of Tolstoy's amongst the pedagogues was the well-known A. N. Strannolubsky, and in the press N. K. Mikhailovsky.

Of course, Tolstoy, this time also, did not succeed in shaking the routine in schools, established, as he expressed it, "by a Zemstvo-Ministerial Department," but his agitation gave another impulse to the Russian educational world: it awakened its conscience, holding up new, living ideals, and it is no exaggeration to say that if Russian schools are free compared with those of western Europe, we owe this in great part to Tolstoy.

During this time he published "A New Primer" and reading-books, which became well known in Russia and circulated in many million copies, being even frequently plagiarised, notwithstanding their rejection by the Ministry of Education.

It seemed as if, during this educational activity, his artistic powers had accumulated, and once again he betook himself to purely literary work. At first he chose the epoch of Peter the Great. In December, 1872, he wrote to N. Strakhoff:

"Till now I have not been working. I am surrounded by books on Peter the Great and his time. I read, I mark; I try to write, but cannot. But what a wonderful epoch for an artist!

Wherever you turn, problems, enigmas, the solution of which may be given by a poet only. The whole crux of Russian life is there. It seems to me that nothing will come out of my preparations. I am studying and agitating myself too much."

The more he studied the subject the greater were the obstacles confronting him when trying to describe it; and in the end—in the summer of 1873—he abandoned those studies altogether.

According to A. S. Behrs, the reason of this was :

"Tolstoy found that his personal opinion on Peter the Great was diametrically opposed to that of the general public, and the whole epoch appeared to him unsympathetic. Tolstoy asserted that the personality and activity of Peter showed no greatness, and that, on the contrary, all his qualities were bad. His so-called great reforms were not adopted for the good of the State, but for his personal profit. The old, high aristocracy being in opposition to his reforms, Peter founded a new capital, (St.) Petersburg, in order to separate himself from them and to be able to pursue his personal, immoral life. The nobility at that time played a rôle of great importance, and consequently were dangerous to him. His reforms and ideas were borrowed from Saxony, where the code of laws was



Photo. Bulta.

The Family Circle at Yasnaya Polyana.

most cruel and moral license had attained its greatest height, which specially suited Peter. Thus Tolstoy explained Peter's friendship with the Kurfürst of Saxony, one of the most immoral amongst the crowned heads of that period. Tolstoy explained Peter's intimacy with Menshikoff, a former street vendor, and Lefort, a Swiss adventurer, by the contempt in which the old nobility held Peter, and amongst whom he could not find a companion in his gay, depraved life. But Tolstoy was most of all revolted by the assassination of the Tsarevitch Alexis."

At last Tolstoy's creative powers found a subject worthy of their application. A comparatively small incident set him writing. Reading aloud the beginning of one of Pushkin's novels: "The guests arrived at the country house," etc., Tolstoy observed, "That is the way to begin; Pushkin is our master. He at once brings the reader into the middle of action. Others would first describe the guests, the rooms, but Pushkin starts the business directly." And going to his study, Tolstoy straightway wrote down the first pages of a novel, the subject of which had already been a long time in his mind. The plot was based on the suicide of a young woman who threw herself under the train near the station Yassenky. Tolstoy knew her, and

was present when the inquest was held. The cause of the suicide was a romance.

Intending to write a story of a society lady who had left her husband, Tolstoy chose as a motto the biblical saying, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," with the intention of explaining the fundamental idea of the story as that people have no right to judge others—that judgment belongs to the Creator of the laws governing the existence of humanity. For human relations there is but one law: that of mercy. Among all the literary critics, only the novelist Dostoevsky understood "Anna Karenin" in this sense. He wrote a splendid article in his "Diary of an Author":

"There is One who says, 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay.' Only He knows the whole mystery of this world and the eventual fate of mankind. Man should not judge with the pride of his infallibility; the hour and time have not yet come. The man who judges must recognise in his own heart that the balance and measure will be an absurdity in his hands if he himself will not bow before the law of inscrutable mystery, and seek the only way out—mercy and love. And this issue has been shown to man in order that he may not perish of despair through not seeing his path or his destiny, and through the conviction that evil is mysterious and

unavoidable. This salvation is pointed out in the powerful scene of the illness of the heroine, when criminals and enemies are transformed into superior beings, into brothers pardoning each other, by mutual forgiveness liberating themselves from lies, faults, and crimes, and thus at once purifying themselves with the full consciousness that pardon has become theirs by right."

Unfortunately, Dostoevsky did not agree with Tolstoy about the end of the novel, when Levin, the positive character of the story, declares himself hostile to the volunteer movement for Servia. This divergence was caused by the Slavophile tendencies from which Dostoevsky could not emancipate himself.

In opposition to the history of the fallen woman, Anna Karenin, another story of spotless family happiness is developed in which we can trace much of Tolstoy's own home-life. The third element is the spiritual development of Levin, who, from a sceptic and egoist, little by little is transformed into a Christian, receiving from an artless peasant his faith, the quintessence of which is shortly expressed in the formula, "To live for God and your own soul."

The religious note now sounded in Tolstoy's literary work was the echo of a religious process

taking place at that time in his mind. It turned away many liberal critics from him, whilst the conservatives, not understanding with whom they had to deal, hurried to proclaim Tolstoy as one of "theirs." He stood alone, not inclining towards either side—tracing his own way.

Whilst writing "Anna Karenin," Tolstoy took a very active part in assisting the starving population of the Samara province, and earned the thanks of many hearts. In 1873, with his family, he spent the summer in the province on his newly acquired estate. Observing the life of the surrounding peasantry, Tolstoy foresaw that the great calamity of a famine was menacing the population, and the Zemstvos and the State were doing nothing to avert it. After a careful investigation in some neighbouring villages, and armed with statistics, he published in August, in the *Moscow Gazette*, an appeal for help. At the same time he attracted the attention of certain high personages at court; donations came in lavishly, and the present misery was considerably alleviated. Altogether nearly two million roubles in money, besides much grain, were collected for the sufferers. The following harvest was abundant, so that the aid given had really been timely, as it afforded the population the means wherewith to bridge over the hard times.

X The strenuous activity of the seventies, his family cares and duties, the question of the education of the children, his successful literary career, his beneficent social work—all these did not fully satisfy Tolstoy, and at the end of that period the same doubts about the meaning of life arose as he had experienced after the death of his brother, towards the end of his bachelor life. At that time, as we know from Tolstoy's own words, he overcame those doubts by his marriage, which opened to him a new and yet untried side of life. But now these doubts, not being subdued by any outside influence, returned with renewed strength and inevitably carried him on to the crisis of his life.

CHAPTER IX

THE CRISIS

FROM childhood Tolstoy had always inclined towards religion. This inclination was first stifled by the traditional rites and ceremonies of the Orthodox Church, then by the full play of his passions, his eventful life, his literary success and fame, by different philosophic theories, and finally by his family life. Nevertheless, this religious disposition was never quite extinguished, and from time to time it manifested itself. But when the last illusion had gone, this powerful sentiment gathered up and, like a torrent, rushed along, sweeping aside every obstacle in its way.

The substance of religion, as Tolstoy had always faintly conceived it, was the relation of man to the fundamental principle of the universe; this relation, and his unity with it, produced in man the conviction of indestructibility, and belief in immortality. Without this belief, life, with the eternal dread of death, would be terribly absurd—even worse than annihilation itself. The conceptions

which led to this belief in immortality were love, self-sacrifice, service to others, to the world, to God—generally, the sacrifice of the ego and devotion to humanity.

These thoughts were rising in his mind at the best moments of his life ; his religious ideas were for the first time clearly formulated in the Caucasus, where the beauty of nature invigorated his soul and the doors of eternity seemed to open before him, shedding on him the rays of a heavenly light. But he was not yet ready to receive this light. He had to pass through many years of suffering before the momentary, passing recognition of the futility of worldly interests became a fixed conviction. Internal, secret growth of the spirit had to run parallel with physical development ; inevitable conflicts between the physical personality and the religious conscience were necessary to decide once for all which was to predominate and influence his life. In this encounter victory remained with religion, and the power of the physical personality was broken for ever.

No illusion could ever restore the importance of the material side of life. In such a struggle souls often perish, and spiritual death is certainly the worst which may befall a man. Though Tolstoy did not perish spiritually, he lost much strength in

this struggle, and when he triumphed, like a new-born child he scarcely could conceive the greatness of the existence he was entering upon. All the stages of this process are told with inimitable sincerity in his "Confession." The state of mind of a man who has lost all interest in a worldly life, but has not yet found anything to replace it, is described by Tolstoy in the images of an Oriental tale :

"To save himself from a wild beast, a traveller jumps into a dry well, but perceives at the bottom a dragon with open jaws, ready to devour him. Not daring to climb out of the well and in order not to be devoured by the dragon, the man catches hold of the branches of a wild shrub growing in a crack in the wall of the well. But his arms grow tired, and he feels that he must soon succumb to one or other of the menacing dangers. He holds on, however, when he sees two mice, one white and one black, at the foot of the shrub, steadily running around it and gnawing it through. He sees that at any moment the shrub may topple over, and he must drop into the jaws of the dragon. The traveller feels that he is inevitably lost ; he gazes around and discovers a few drops of honey on the shrub. He can reach them with his tongue, and licks them up. Thus do I cling to the branches of



The Count and Countess in the Crimea.

life, knowing that the jaws of death may close on me at any moment, and I cannot understand why I am in such torture. I am trying to suck the honey which used to comfort me, but now I do not enjoy it. The black and white mice continue day and night to gnaw the branch to which I cling. I clearly see the dragon and the mice, and cannot take my eyes off them. This is not a fable, but a clear, indisputable truth, evident to everybody."

All the wise men of the world whom Tolstoy addressed with the question of the meaning of life answered that life was evil and meaningless; and he decided to quit life, and was near to suicide. But his love for the people, his interest in the life of the workers, who saw a meaning in life, saved him. He put to himself the question: "Is life perhaps evil and meaningless because I am living wrongly? That is to say, is my life evil and meaningless—my life and that of all those of my circle who, like myself, do not see any meaning in life?"

The question so sincerely put to himself brought him salvation. There was only one answer: working people, serving others, learn the meaning of life, love life, and are not afraid to die. This meaning of life for the people has taken the shape of religion. Tolstoy accepted this religion of the

people, wishing to unite himself with them in their adoration of God. But the process of his regeneration was not yet complete. As he tells himself periodically, his soul was lifted up only to be cast down :

“What is the meaning of this spiritual ecstasy and death ? I am not living when I lose belief in the existence of God, and long ago I would have killed myself but for the faint hope of finding Him. I only live when I seek and feel Him. But why am I yet seeking ? a voice asked within me. Here He is. Without Him there is no life. To know God and to live are synonymous. God is life.”

He was saved from despair, life returned to him—the very life force of his youth—but now it was a conscious life ; he had found God, and had faith in Him. And his faith was one with that of the working people. Tolstoy himself describes the end of his search and doubts :

“I renounced the life of my circle, but I recognised that it was not life but an imitation ; that the luxury in which we lived deprived us of the capacity to understand life, and in order to understand life I must understand not the mode of existence of us parasites of life, who are exceptions, but that of the toilers, those who create life and the meaning of life. The simple working people

around me were Russians, and I addressed myself to them for the meaning which they give to life. Their meaning was the following: 'Man is created by God, and made in such a way that he can save or lose his soul. The problem for every man is to save his soul. To save his soul he must live according to God's will, and in order to live according to God's will he must renounce all the pleasures of life; he must labour, be humble, patient, and merciful.' The people gather this meaning of life from their religion, transmitted to them by their pastors, and preserved among them by tradition. This conception is clear to me, and near to my heart."

But this peaceful haven was only a stage on the road to his religious development. The form of the popular religion being the Greek Orthodox Church and its creed, Tolstoy, adopting it, came soon in direct collision with the established Church. For him, faith meant salvation from death. The Church creed, however, at its best was only serving the interest of the State. Soon Tolstoy recognised that his faith, purified by reason, had nothing in common with the Church creed but a few religious terms. In order to have the right to assert this, he submitted the dogma of the Orthodox Church to severe examination.

The results he published in his book, "A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology."

Freeing himself from the creed of the Church, he was inevitably led to examine the teaching of Christianity as contained in the Bible, and consequently the Bible itself. He did this in a lengthy work, "The Four Gospels Unified and Translated." In this work, step by step, he analysed the text of the Gospels, throwing aside that which was not clear or not directly connected with the main idea of Christianity. The passages clearly expressing this principal idea he arranged in a connected, easily understood form, and the whole teaching assumed a complete, harmonious, and popular character. Arriving at the very root of Christianity, Tolstoy undertook a new work to explain his conception of it: "What is My Faith?" It may be said that, with this book, the cycle of his religious development was accomplished.

CHAPTER X

“ WHAT THEN MUST WE DO ? ”

IN his “ What is My Faith ? ” Tolstoy writes :

“ Five years ago I adopted the teaching of Christ, and my life suddenly changed ; I ceased to wish that which I formerly wished, and I began to wish that which I formerly did not wish. What formerly appeared good now appeared evil ; and what formerly appeared evil now appeared good. With me happened just what happened to a man who went out for some business and on the way decided that it was unnecessary, and therefore returned. All that which was at the right side, then was at the left side, and that which had seemed on the left was then on the right ; the desire to be as far as possible from home gave way to the desire to be as near as possible to home. The direction of my life —my desires—became different ; and good and evil changed places. All this was the result of my understanding the teaching of Christ otherwise than before.”

Thus he saw in a new light all his surroundings and his own conduct. But life went on in the same way, and his new relation to it inevitably led to a series of collisions. Such collisions he could not avoid, even in his own family life, till then happy and tranquil, nor among his literary friends and his acquaintances in the high society to which he himself belonged. Finally, the conflict between his new conceptions and his surroundings extended itself to the State.

The events of Russian life at that period require special attention. The fundamental breaking up of the old order had begun, and the first thunderbolt fell on March 13th, 1881. The Revolutionary Executive Committee condemned Alexander II. to death, and carried out the sentence. This event shook the whole Russian nation, and made a deep impression on Tolstoy. It appeared to him as a confirmation of his conviction that the Russian State and society had lost the very foundation of Christian morality, but, on the other hand, the two hostile camps awakened in him boundless pity as he saw their profound error.

He addressed a long letter to the Emperor, Alexander III. He pleaded to the Tsar to pardon the culprits for the sake of Christ's teaching, as he considered the only way of Russia's salvation lay

in the precepts of Jesus. The two other methods—cruel repression and liberal reforms—had been tried and had failed. No answer was made to this letter, and the regicides were executed. These events made a deep impression on his soul.

At that time a great change took place in his home life. He went with his family to live in Moscow. Town life was a great trial for Tolstoy: the crying contrast between the city beggars and the insolent opulence of the rich; at every street corner hungry beggars with hands stretched out for alms, and gluttons gorging themselves in brilliantly lighted restaurants; coachmen shivering on their boxes whilst their masters enjoyed the music of the theatres or churches—all this made his heart ache, imbued as he was with the Christian spirit and seeking for its manifestation around him.

In the winter of 1882 a census was taken in Moscow. Tolstoy conceived the idea of seizing the occasion to penetrate into the worst and most wretched slums of the poor, in order to study them and devise some means of alleviation. He made an appeal to Moscow society, inviting it to make use of the coming census in order to get into touch with the poor and to extend to them unflinching brotherly and Christian help. The resources needed for this purpose he supposed might be collected by

public subscription, philanthropic evenings, and by personal demand for help and sympathy from the rich.

Tolstoy offered his services to the Moscow municipality for the census, and, according to his express wish, he was appointed to one of the poorest quarters of the city, where the night shelters of Roshnoff are situated. During the census, Tolstoy plumbed to the very bottom of Moscow's poverty and wretchedness, but all his efforts to organise some system of assistance were unsuccessful. He had an experience somewhat similar to that attending his philanthropic efforts among the peasants forty years before, described in the sketch, "A Morning of a Landowner." He now, as then, saw that the poverty and destitution of these people were the result of the worldly, luxurious life which he himself lived, and consequently that it was impossible to help those people whose sufferings were the direct outcome of one's own idle life—that real aid, the result of a moral and brotherly feeling, could not be given to people looking on one with defiance and hatred.

This unsuccessful attempt at charity was described by Tolstoy in a book, "What Then Must We Do?" He carefully, and in detail, examined the condition of the town, the division of the popu-



The Last Portrait of Tolstoy—taken six weeks before his death.

lation into rich and poor, idle and working, and reached the conclusion that only a radical change in the whole social order could abolish the dreadful, bitter, and savage poverty created by the opulent and idle life of the privileged classes.

Tolstoy considered money one of the principal evils of the existing social order, as money is, so to say, concentrated compulsion, easily transferred to another. Our false social order is upheld by false science with its complicated theories justifying existing evil.

“What then must we do?” Tolstoy asked again, laying bare all the sores of the existing order by a subtle and merciless analysis. The answer he gave is the same as that given by John the Baptist to his contemporaries: repent, be re-born, give to the poor, not a farthing or a shilling from your thousands and millions, but share with the poor their hard, working lives. Accordingly, Tolstoy began to reform his own life; he renounced everything superfluous—wine, tobacco, meat, etc.—and endeavoured to spend his time in productive work for the general welfare. He divided his days into four parts, and gave the first part to intellectual work, the second to hard physical labour, the third to crafts and light manual labour, and the fourth to intercourse with people. He tried

to repress anger and excitability in himself, to be gentle with everybody, to tame his pride, and continued his struggle against evil passions and habits.

Town-life began to be very heavy for him, and when the occasion presented itself he would return to Yasnaya Polyana. Sometimes he travelled the whole distance on foot. In the village he invariably threw himself heart and soul into the peasants' work—ploughing, mowing, cutting wood, building peasants' huts, especially for widows and orphans.

The spreading of his new views and his new way of living soon began to attract those people in whom the same ideas and feelings were slumbering, but who awaited a powerful initiative before starting together upon a new road. Some of these people came to him, others Tolstoy found himself; and in this way was formed around him a circle of new men, quite different from his former acquaintances. With the latter he did not break formally, but they left him little by little, feeling unable to follow him. The remarkable peasant Sutaieff, the painter N. Gay, the teacher Orloff, Feodoroff, the librarian of the Roumiantsef Museum, the peasant Bondaref (afterwards exiled to Siberia)—such as these were Tolstoy's new friends. The light of his faith began to penetrate also his former social circle;

V. G. Tchertkoff made his acquaintance, and, through him, the writer of these lines. Tolstoy began to evolve a project to help the people in a new way: to select from the rich heritage of centuries of culture, art, and science all that is most useful and accessible and that leads to the welfare and union of mankind. The publishing society of *Posrednik* (“The Mediator”) was started, and Tolstoy inaugurated a new sphere for his activity—that of the propagation of his ideas, now fully developed. This was during the middle of the 'eighties.

CHAPTER XI

POPULAR LITERATURE

WHEN in Moscow, Tolstoy frequently visited the Nikolsky Market and the Ilinsky Gate, where, during the 'eighties, the pedlars used to buy their stock of popular literature. Tolstoy had long since wished to bring new blood into this literature, which at that period was a strange mixture of booklets on saints' lives, patriotic military tales, and strange romantic adventures, mostly written by illiterate people in a coarse style, often without beginning or end, and, generally, indigestible as intellectual food. Strange to say, Russian literature of that period was illustrious with great names, but not a single one—poets, novelists, or scientists—was ever brought before the mass of the people. This injustice Tolstoy was disposed, if not to remedy entirely, at least to reduce as much as possible.

As a beginning, he wrote a series of highly artistic tales to be published in the form of popular literature, but in good style, with attractive

illustrations and such moral tendencies as Tolstoy alone was capable of imparting. The form of these tales, the language and style, were so simple and perfect that it was impossible to add or to omit a single word; they were comprehensible and pleasing to young and old alike.

To the realisation of this splendid project, Tolstoy's friend, V. G. Tchertkoff, gave a great deal of moral and material assistance, and the business side of the plan was carried out with great success by T. D. Sitin, at that time a small Moscow publisher of popular literature, and now the head of the big publishing firm of T. D. Sitin and Co. The success of the *Posrednik* is due in great part to his energy, business knowledge, and sincere devotion to the cause. The author of this book took also a modest part in the initiation of the business. To give an idea how successful our enterprise proved to be, I here quote a few figures of our editions. Each of Tolstoy's booklets was seldom printed in less than 24,000 copies, and yearly we had five of such editions. The number of our publications began to grow so fast that we soon had to count copies by the million. Towards the end of the fourth year we saw that the approximate number of copies sold was 12,000,000, which meant 3,000,000 annually.

As the authors did not copyright any of their writings for the *Posrednik*, many other publishers brought out reprints of our books. The number of these reprints is not known, but is, without doubt, immense. Our publications grew so in quantity that it was impossible even for the Government inspectors to keep full control, and sometimes hundreds of thousands of copies eluded their vigilant eyes. Three to four millions yearly were kept up a fairly long time. The Report of the Moscow Committee of the Society for the Promotion of Popular Instruction, in the middle of the 'nineties, also states the number of copies sold of the publications of the *Posrednik* as 3,500,000 yearly.

The soul of this great enterprise was Tolstoy, who gave much of his energy to it. The first publications were tales from his reading-book—"The Prisoner of the Caucasus," "God Sees the Truth." Later were published "What People are Living By," "A Fire Neglected Consumes the House," "Where Love is there is God," "Two Old Men," "The Candle," and "Ivan the Fool." Soon many of the best Russian authors followed Tolstoy's example, and *Posrednik* published popular editions of Leskoff, Garshin, Ertel, Potekhin, Ostrovsky, Savikhin, Obolensky, Wagner, Nemiro-



The Last Illness. Tolstoy in his Bedroom, talking to Dr. Makovitski.

vitch-Danchenko, Mamin-Sibiriak, etc. Besides books, popular pictures were issued by artists like Rêpin, Kivshenko, Savitsky, and Sologub, and also reproductions from foreign masterpieces; the text for these pictures was always written or edited by Tolstoy himself.

While serving the people as an author, Tolstoy never neglected his physical labours. When living in Moscow he was frequently cutting and splitting wood, drawing water, working as a cobbler; and he wore boots made by himself.

In early spring he was in the habit of returning to Yasnaya Polyana, often on foot with a knapsack on his back. There he shared in the peasants' work: ploughing, manuring, sowing, haymaking, harvesting. When at home in autumn and winter, he might often be seen with a hatchet and saw, cutting wood, which he distributed among the peasants for building purposes, or to orphans and other needy ones for firewood. Tolstoy's life was, indeed, full of many and varied activities.

Sometimes he had to pay dearly for his zeal, and his want of care for himself whilst at work with the peasants. In 1866, for instance, during hay-making, he hurt his knee when climbing into a cart. When the worst pain had subsided he paid no further attention to the hurt. After

a few days, inflammation set in and, later, a wound appeared which began to involve the bone. Tolstoy was obliged to keep his bed for a whole month, after undergoing a serious surgical operation which had become necessary in order to prevent blood-poisoning.

He bore his illness patiently, though before the danger was over he told his visitors, simply and seriously, that he might die from his wound, and rejoiced that his illness allowed him a few leisure hours for thoughts of life and death. During his convalescence—and for a very long time Tolstoy could not go out—he conceived the idea of writing a popular drama, and the same autumn he wrote *The Power of Darkness*. What befell the piece could only happen in Russia. Authorised by the censor for publication, with a few omissions, the drama was staged at the Imperial Theatre. When everything was prepared, the rehearsals concluded, the costumes and scenery ready, the Government prohibited the play in all theatres. Only after many years was the authorisation given for representation.

CHAPTER XII

THE SPREAD OF TOLSTOY'S INFLUENCE

THE new religio-philosophic works of Tolstoy were prohibited in Russia, but they continued to spread. In his native land they were circulated either by hand-written copies or in lithographed or hectographed form, but they were printed in Russian beyond the frontier—in Geneva, London, and Berlin—where also translations appeared. The French translation of Tolstoy's most important work, "What is My Faith?" was carried out by his friend Prince Leonide Urusoff, who sincerely sympathised with the views expressed in that work. A somewhat shortened English translation was published by V. G. Tchertkoff, together with "Confession" and a short exposition of the Gospels. Shortly after, the same works appeared in Germany. These translations acquainted the western world with Tolstoy's new views, and they undoubtedly popularised him much more than his novels, which, though appreciated, often were not fully understood by western readers, owing in great part to difficulties of translation.

Simultaneously with the wider dissemination of Tolstoy's works, there began to pour into Yasnaya Polyana books and manuscripts from people more or less in sympathy with his views. Later, visitors from countries far and near made pilgrimage to his home, and Tolstoy began to be the centre of a definite and widespread phase of spiritual life.

One of the first of these new acquaintances was a sectarian, Sutaieff, to whom earlier reference has been made. He was a typical Russian religious personality. Basing his views on the Gospel, he preached personal life in harmony with the inner voice of conscience, and communism and brotherhood in social life. Tolstoy visited Sutaieff in his village, Shavelino, in the Tver province, and Sutaieff paid a return visit to Tolstoy in Moscow. Afterwards they met once more in Yasnaya Polyana. Each meeting with Sutaieff accentuated the favourable impression he had made upon Tolstoy. During Sutaieff's stay in Moscow, according to Tolstoy's own words, he greatly helped the latter to elucidate his ideas upon charity. Sutaieff startled Tolstoy by his daring thought: his project to abolish poverty—to distribute the poor among the well-to-do people in order that together they might lead useful, productive lives.



The House in which Tolstoy died.



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Another remarkable man who produced a great impression upon Tolstoy was also a self-taught sectarian—the peasant Timothy Bondaref. Deported to Siberia together with his peasant co-religionists, for spreading the teachings of the Sabbatarians, they settled near Minusinsk, the southern part of Central Siberia, where they formed a community. Bondaref's mind was especially occupied with the question of the causes of social inequality. His arguments were very original, and based on the Bible. The first commandment given by God to man, said he, was "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"; to woman, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." The majority of women up to to-day have obeyed the latter commandment—even the Empress "brings forth children in sorrow"—because one cannot buy a child: it would always be another's. But the men try by every means to avoid the commandment laid upon them; the educated classes do not earn their bread in the sweat of their face, but buy the bread of others. Hence the evil caused by the privileged classes: the sloth, luxury, and immorality on the one side, and poverty, ignorance, and wretchedness on the other. No preaching of love will remedy this evil. The commandment of love came later, and people are trying to

shield themselves under it. Unless the commandment of work is fulfilled, that of love cannot be carried out, and all preaching of love without labour appears hypocrisy.

All these ideas were developed by Bondaref in his book, "Diligence, or the Triumph of Agriculturists," the manuscript of which was sent to Tolstoy. Finding that Bondaref had many views in common with himself, Tolstoy exchanged with him several friendly letters. He decided to publish Bondaref's work, which was written in a powerful, original style. He corrected it, and wrote an introduction. At first the censor prohibited the publication, but now the book is issued by the *Posrednik*.

Tolstoy's views began to penetrate into Russian intellectual circles. After the assassination of Alexander II. the number of young people with revolutionary tendencies considerably diminished. Ideals and projects for a reconstruction of society were sought in another direction, and the new thoughts of Tolstoy were much more sympathetic with the state of mind of those young people. Amongst them began to develop a serious moral and religious movement combined with the desire for radical political reforms. Owing to this movement, several agricultural colonies of intellectual

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people were started ; also many persons from the middle classes and nobility went to live among the workers ; others refused to take the oath or to fulfil their military duties. One of the first cases was the refusal, in 1886, of Alexis Zabulovsky to serve as a soldier. He was condemned to two years in the disciplinary battalion at Askhabad in Central Asia, where he suffered greatly, especially during the long marches to his destination. Afterwards the refusals became more and more frequent, in Russia as well as in foreign countries, and nowadays they occur at every recruiting season.

The spread of Tolstoy's works in western Europe and America also led to communications from and correspondence with societies accepting Christianity in the same spirit as himself ; that is to say, condemning violence whether by the individual or by the State. From England the first response came from the Quakers ; from America the Shakers, and members of non-resistance societies formed by Harrison and Ball ; from Austria wrote a sect of Nazarenes, the members of which regularly refuse military service and are imprisoned in consequence. As to the Russian Dukhobors, we shall speak of them later.

In 1885, Tolstoy was visited by a Russian emi-

grant who had been living a long time in America —William Frey, a follower of Auguste Comte, and an exponent of Comte's "Religion of Humanity." Notwithstanding some eccentricity in his teaching, his charming personality made a deep and sympathetic impression on Tolstoy. Frey tried to induce Tolstoy to promulgate Comte's doctrine and, although he did not succeed, he gained Tolstoy's personal sympathy and deep love.

Just at this period Tolstoy studied Henry George's theory of land nationalisation and single tax. He adopted it whole-heartedly. As is known, this theory consists in the abolition of all taxes except one, namely a tax on the land, and that in proportion to its rent. By this means, it was argued, the nationalisation of the land would be accomplished, and large properties in land would be abolished without any violence or expropriation. Henry George developed his ideas in many works, the majority of which are translated into Russian.

In 1887 George Kennan, the well-known traveller in Siberia, went to see Tolstoy, but they could not agree in their views. Kennan found non-resistance to violence, especially in self-defence, absurd, and notwithstanding Tolstoy's great esteem

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for Kennan because of his denunciation of the horrors of Russian prisons and deportation to Siberia, he was far from satisfied with the visit.

Quite the contrary was the case in the visit of Professor Massarik, a Czech and a doctor of philosophy, who left a very pleasant impression by his simplicity and clear understanding of high, spiritual problems. But the visit of Déroulède, the well-known French patriot, was not fruitful of mutual understanding. His hatred of Germany, and his hope of revenge, brought him to Russia with the view of arousing public opinion there against Germany and of inducing Russia to declare war against her neighbour, so that the latter might be attacked from two sides. He therefore appealed to Tolstoy as being a leader of public opinion. Tolstoy, in a humorous sketch, described the efforts of Déroulède to explain to the peasants of Yasnaya Polyana how Germany was to be squeezed from two sides, and how the peasants replied that it would be better to invite the Germans to work beside them. Déroulède's mission proved a failure.

Tolstoy's ideas began to penetrate amongst the peasantry and working classes chiefly owing to the publications of the *Posrednik*. In 1887 he received a copy of a catechism from the south

Russian Stundis community, in which the texts of the gospels had been quoted from Tolstoy's edition, and the whole catechism was in accordance with his conception of Christianity. Thus the light he had kindled began to shine over a world thirsting for love and truth.

Towards the end of the 'eighties, the bitterness of Tolstoy's relations with his family and surroundings, and especially with his former aristocratic friends, gradually lessened, and his spiritual life began to be serene and tranquil. On October 5th, 1887, he celebrated his silver wedding in the seclusion of his family circle.

His works were always highly appreciated by the best of the Russian painters. As early as 1873, Kramskoy had painted his portrait, which may be considered the best for its resemblance and expression. In 1882, the radical painter, N. Gay, first visited Tolstoy and became his friend and follower. This passionate, impressionable, and at the same time kind and ingenuous, man was whole-heartedly attached to the great Russian reformer, and remained so till his death. He often stayed at the latter's house, and Tolstoy in his turn frequently visited Gay on his small estate in the Chernigov province; besides which they maintained a steady correspondence. In 1884

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Gay painted Tolstoy sitting at his writing-table. Though his eyes are not visible, the whole figure is so characteristic, and so lovingly and strikingly rendered, that this portrait became very dear to Tolstoy's friends.

In 1887, Russia's greatest painter, Eliah Rèpin, came to Yasnaya Polyana. His picture—Tolstoy ploughing—is wonderful for its deep meaning. Besides the technical and artistic value, it is an emblem of the union of the greatest Russian genius with the Russian people and land. This picture is now one of the most popular in lithographic and photographic copies and post cards; it is, for Russia, one of the epoch-making pictures. The best Russian sculptors also, such as Trubetskoy, Ginsburg, and Aronson, have immortalised Tolstoy in their works.

During Tolstoy's conversation with his numerous visitors on the new conception of Christianity, and on the consequent change in the relation of man to man, he observed that his words were not always convincing to his visitors, chiefly because they differed on the very fundamental principles of life. This led Tolstoy to a systematic explanation of his philosophy in a book called "On Life," published towards the end of the 'eighties.

CHAPTER XIII

FURTHER LITERARY AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

IN his book "On Life," Tolstoy defines the conditions under which a man's regeneration to a new life begins. Every conscious man must observe that in his endeavour to acquire personal happiness he finds himself in direct conflict with those around him, who are also struggling for happiness, and this strife gives him no rest—even poisons his efforts for well-being. Besides, if man succeeds in snatching a particle of happiness, it ceases very soon to satisfy him, because he understands its illusory character. The more he experiences the satisfaction of reaching personal well-being, the more he recognises its ephemeral character, and this conclusion does not allow him to enjoy happiness when obtained. And, further, however stable and complete the material well-being may appear, a conscious man cannot help seeing death ready at any moment to devour him and thus destroy all his illusion of acquired happiness.

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There is no way out of it. Life becomes paralysed, and what remains—the inertia of life—may suffice only to make an end of this absurd contradiction of life.

There is only one way of salvation—to renounce material pleasures, to be re-born, and to adopt love as the principle of life. Love—not in the sense of a physical preference for one over another, but a love which has as its dominating impulse the welfare of others and loving service to them rather than making one's own personal happiness the chief end. Such love solves all contradictions of life. Love ends the struggle, and replaces it by mutual concessions and brotherly assistance. Love's realm is unlimited and without disillusion and satiety, because moral happiness is independent of our physical personality. Love does not fear death, because the aim of love, service to others, is immortal and cannot be interrupted by one of the disciples falling out of the ranks. Love, by its substance, unites man to eternity.

This idea is developed by Tolstoy with a deep, psychological analysis, and, demonstrating the groundlessness of the fear of death, he concludes by saying :

“ What man needs is given to him—life which

cannot be death, and happiness which cannot be evil.”

Russian censorship found this work harmful also, and the first edition was burnt. But now it is freely sold, in complete and in abridged editions.

At that time Tolstoy turned his attention to human excesses, such as smoking, drunkenness, the eating of meat, and sexual intemperance. On these questions he wrote a series of articles. Smoking and drinking he dealt with in “Why do Men Intoxicate Themselves?” It appeared as the introduction to the book by Dr. Alexeef. Tolstoy explained vegetarianism in an article entitled “The First Step,” also written as an introduction to a book (“The Ethics of Food”), translated into Russian under his supervision. In addition, he wrote short, popular articles on the same theme, and even gave it an artistic expression. He also organised a temperance society. Persons desiring to enter this society were asked to sign the following form :

“Recognising the great evil and sin of drunkenness, I, the undersigned, decide never to drink any alcohol, vodka, wine, or beer; not to buy or offer it to others; with all my strength I will convince others, especially young people and children, of the evils of drunkenness and the

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advantages of a sober life ; and I will gain members for our society. We beg all agreeing with us to keep this form, to write down on it the names of new members, and to communicate with us. If any intend to give up this pledge, we beg him to communicate with us."

These forms were distributed promptly and covered with signatures, and towards the end of the first year there were over a thousand members. It is understood that Tolstoy himself was the first to set the example. He gave up smoking, and neither meat nor wine appeared again on his table.

Especially, however, he devoted his pen to the fight against sexual excess. This question, in its general aspect, he had touched already in his drama, "The Power of Darkness," in which crime is committed by a man not evil by nature, but who has become entangled in an illicit alliance. With special vigour he drew in "The Kreutzer Sonata" a picture of the dreadful consequences of such sinful relations. He presents to his readers three stages in those relations. The first is the full submission of woman to man, in whose sensual power she is, and who exacts from her absolute chastity ; the second is the antithesis of the first—a liberal recognition of the equal rights of woman in sin ; and the third is the semi-patriarchal res-

pectability which is the hypocritical family morality practised by the majority of married persons in the middle and upper classes, and at the bottom of which lies, not spiritual union between man and woman, but crude sensuality in the guise of conventionality. This sensuality begins to manifest itself in youth, and poisons the purity of the relations between man and woman. Hence jealousy, unfaithfulness, and often tragedies. There is only one way of salvation—absolute chastity, and “let him who can practise it, do so.” The most a Christian ought to permit himself is monogamy. The artistic form of this story, the dialogue, and the first person being employed throughout, misled not a few readers into the belief that it was an autobiography. Needless to say, this belief is absolutely unjustifiable.

At the end of 1889, Tolstoy finished his comedy, which at first he had called “Too Cunning,” but rechristened “The Fruits of Enlightenment.” In this comedy he again ridiculed the indolence of Russian high society and the would-be scientific solemnity with which they treat trivial affairs. The last touches to the comedy were given by Tolstoy at the request of his daughter, who wanted the piece for a performance at home, in Yasnaya Polyana. Tolstoy took great interest in the work, assisted

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at the rehearsals, and gave his advice to the actors. When he was alone, however, he felt depressed by the extravagance and futility accompanying those preparations. The whole house was topsyturvy with the great number of guests, the performance, and the entertainment of the young people. He wrote in his diary at that time :

“ I am ashamed of all these expenses in the midst of poverty.”

The painter Gay, more and more carried away by Tolstoy's conception of Christianity, sought to express it in pictures. The first of these was “ Christ and Pilate,” with the motto, “ What is truth ? ” In this picture, very highly appreciated by Tolstoy, the idea was expressed that Pilate's words “ What is truth ? ” were not a question directly addressed to Christ, but an ironical observation of Pilate's implying that it is not worth while to speak the truth as Christ preached it. Indeed, looking at the figure of the well-fed Roman patrician, and then on that of Christ, exhausted by a whole night of torture, his feverish, brilliant eyes full of thought, it becomes clear that for Christ truth is everything, for Pilate nothing.

So Tolstoy's days were passed. But the dark years of threatening famine were approaching to call forth his practical activity.

CHAPTER XIV

THE YEARS OF FAMINE

IN the summer of 1891 a complete failure of the spring, as well as the winter, corn was experienced throughout nearly half the area of Russia. Towards the end of the summer alarming rumours of a coming famine had already begun to spread.

As he had done eighteen years earlier, Tolstoy took the initiative in giving assistance to the starving peasantry. In the autumn he visited many districts of the Tula province, and with anxiety observed the empty cornfields of the peasants. It was evident to him that the population would be unable to feed itself till the next harvest without outside help. Hostile to any complicated artificial system, Tolstoy decided to begin at once to help personally, without any organised plan for the future.

In the beginning of November, he, two of his daughters, and a niece, and having only £50 with them, went to the estate of a friend, J. Raevsky, in the Ryazan province, and there established

themselves with the purpose, as he wrote, "to do what God orders—to feed, and distribute whatever there is." The place was one of the worst in the famine region. After a week he wrote :

"Everybody is busy at some good work—soup kitchens for the poorest. The girls have opened a school, and they try to help everybody in all ways. I am delighted with them. The time is critical; the conditions are strained and dangerous."

Thus modestly Tolstoy started to give assistance with his family, but rumours about his work soon spread. Besides the material aid, he published an article, "How to Help the Starving Population," in which he showed the inefficiency of the Government's method of distributing flour and grain among the poor. He set out the needs of the situation in the following way :

"Help to the starving population can be two-fold : first by the upkeep of the peasants' homesteads ; second, by saving them from the danger of illness and even death by the lack, or bad quality, of food."

He drew the following conclusions as to the best means of satisfying these two needs :

"In order to prevent the partial or total ruin

of the peasants' homes, I believe there is only one remedy—to start public works.

“For the second purpose—to save the starving from illness caused by the lack, or bad quality, of food—there is, in my opinion, one effectual means: the creation in each village of a soup kitchen where each hungry person can be fed.”

This dual purpose kept Tolstoy active. His work in connection with the famine soon began to be known, not only in Russia, but also in foreign countries. His wife wrote an appeal for help, pointing out that Tolstoy was already living and working among the starving peasants. Donations began to come in, and the means at the disposal of Tolstoy rapidly increased, and, consequently, enlarged his work. Towards the end of 1891 he had started as many as 72 soup kitchens, and placed them under numerous helpers of both sexes. In the following April he reported 187 soup kitchens, 246 in July, and the number of persons fed as 13,000. Besides this, he organised 124 “children’s homes,” where 3,000 small children were fed with milk porridge. Firewood, as well as food, was distributed, and fodder for the cattle and horses. Flax and bark were given out to make work for the peasants, and in the spring various seeds, such as oats, potatoes, hemp, and millet. Horses



The Death-Mask of Tolstoy.

were bought and distributed among such peasants as had lost theirs. Bread was baked, and sold at a low price. In addition, incidental help was given in repairing and building peasants' huts, assistance in burials, gifts of books, etc. All these tasks were carried out under the direct supervision of Tolstoy in four districts of the two neighbouring provinces, Ryazan and Tula.

Tolstoy's example was soon followed, and in all the famine provinces numerous organisations were formed. In the Samara province, in two districts, Tolstoy's son Leo was engaged in the same work, for which part of the donations received by his father was sent to him. The following winter—1892-3—was no less severe, and aid to the people was continued; but this time Tolstoy himself was not present, and the work was carried on with less energy. He published reports periodically, and they were highly instructive documents.

During his activity as organiser, he occupied himself with a literary work of some magnitude—"The Kingdom of God Is Within You; or, Christianity Not as a Mystical Teaching, but as a New Conception of Life." In this work, as in "What is My Faith?" published ten years before, Tolstoy, with great power, develops his concep-

tion of Christianity, sharply criticises contemporary pagan ethics, shows the crying contradiction in which people are living who do not believe in Christ, and in conclusion indicates the way out of the difficulty.

As usual, the book was prohibited by the censor, and was circulated by hand-written, lithograph and hectograph copies, or in foreign editions. Soon it was translated into most of the European languages. Amongst other matters, Tolstoy deals in the work with the contemporary State and its organisation, which he severely condemns. For his condemnation of the State he was called an Anarchist, and, with a few reservations, this may be admitted as just. But his anarchism, which denies the enforced organisation of power, is based on the understanding that man, spiritually regenerated and imbued with Christian teaching, has in himself the unalterable divine law of truth and love, which has no need to be strengthened by human laws. Consequently Tolstoy's anarchism does not lead to disorder and licence, but to the highest moral order and perfect life.

This important work was followed by some smaller ones, such as "Christianity and Patriotism," in which, from a Christian point of view,

he considers the tragi-comedy of the Franco-Russian Alliance. This he followed up by "Non-activity," which he wrote à propos of Zola's and Dumas' letters, the former of whom preached work without giving any conception of life or the aim of work, and the latter the necessity for a religious conception of the ideals of brotherhood and love amongst all men. Tolstoy points out that work itself cannot be an aim—that it is only an obligatory, unavoidable condition of life. If man has no true conception of the meaning of life, does not know where to go and what to do, it would be better for him to be in a state of non-activity and to think over his life and find its meaning; then, whatever work he undertakes will become productive and sacred.

At the same time Tolstoy was translating Guy de Maupassant, Bernardin de St. Pierre, Amiel, Mazzini, and other authors, for the publications of the *Posrednik*. In 1895 "Master and Servant" appeared, in which, in an original way, but in a truly Christian spirit, the question of the relation between masters and men is solved. In order to help and to save his worker, the master must sacrifice his own life; the worker spends his whole existence for his master, and consequently justice and equality can only be

restored if the master be willing to give his life for his man.

In the same year Tolstoy took part in a great historical event: the breaking out with new force of the Dukhobor movement in the Caucasus.

CHAPTER XV

THE DUKHOBOR MOVEMENT

DURING the night of July 10th, 1895, at three different places in Trans-Caucasia, the Dukhobors piled up their arms, poured oil upon them, and then burned them amid the singing of psalms. When we Tolstoyans learned the motives of this remarkable act, we were struck by the spiritual affinity between us and the leaders of the Dukhobor movement. This affinity led the authorities, as well as independent investigators, to ascribe the Dukhobor movement to the propagation amongst them of Tolstoy's ideas. In reality, the Dukhobor movement was much more complicated. The Dukhobor teaching had existed for over a century, and its main principles—condemnation of violence, of taking life, and of all church ritual—came very near to Tolstoy's conception of Christianity. The positive side of their teaching—productive communities, brotherhood, and solidarity—is certainly very similar to that of Tolstoy. Therefore the Dukhobor leaders, although but slightly acquainted

with his works, were delighted, and recognised in him a great spiritual authority. Certainly, by this affinity and his genius, Tolstoy, even against his will, became a leader of the movement. In sympathy with their true Christian conduct, their humble, patient endurance of hardships and tortures at the hands of the military authorities, their gentle answers to their persecutors, their habit of mutual aid, Tolstoy tried in every way to assist them—morally and materially. He used his influence in high quarters; he urged his friends to do the same, and to give personal help to these poor sufferers when expelled from their homes and distributed among the villages of the non-Russian mountain population. He forwarded to them donations which he had received on their behalf, and his letters to them were in the most touching and kindly terms. When the condition of the exiled Dukhobors began to be very critical, some of their friends addressed an appeal to the Russian public in order to put an end to the terrible persecution by the Government. Tolstoy joined in the appeal, and wrote a strong and powerful afterword to it. The signatories to the document, as well as some of those who had helped the Dukhobors, were exiled to the Baltic provinces, and others were banished to foreign countries. The weight of the

whole organisation of assistance and protection then fell upon Tolstoy's shoulders. At last the permission of the Government was obtained for the Dukhobors to emigrate. They began their preparations, but, ruined as they were, and dispersed in exile, they had no means to make a start or to charter a steamer to carry them to Canada, where the authorities had promised them land. A large sum of money was needed, and to collect it in Russia was extremely difficult. Then Tolstoy came to the rescue. He put the finishing touches to a novel begun long before, and offered it to the well-known publisher, Marx, on condition that all author's fees should be devoted to Dukhobor emigration. In response to an appeal to the English Quakers for help, and to other friends of the Dukhobors, further funds were collected, and the emigration took place. In this way Tolstoy's magnanimous aid to the Dukhobors gave the whole intellectual world the moral benefit of his great novel, "Resurrection."

It is not necessary to dwell on the contents of this well-known work, but only to point out that the fall and regeneration of a human soul are depicted in it with the deepest insight and utmost veracity. Throughout the novel the State, the Church, and the existing social order are criticised,

as well as human relations. Owing to this critical side, the novel was never published in full in Russia. The complete text was brought out in England by Tchertkoff who, owing to the Dukhobor movement, was banished from Russia. He started "The Free Age Press" publications in England, and for eight years issued all the first editions of Tolstoy's work of that period.

The connection between Tolstoy and the Dukhobors was maintained, and they regularly informed him as to the condition of their life in their communities.

The Dukhobor movement had a world-wide importance, and Tolstoy's participation in it raised it yet higher in public estimation. News of it was published in all civilised countries, and the example of Christian self-denial found imitators in France, England, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, where more or less numerous groups were formed with the aim of realising in life the true teachings of Jesus. In many countries military service was refused, in spite of severe punishment. Communities were organised and agricultural colonies were started; a series of periodicals was published devoted to the investigation of Christian questions; and the vegetarian movement also increased.

At that time Tolstoy wrote quite a number of

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articles, of which mention shall be made only of the more important. The first to be noted was an essay, "What is Art?" in which he severely examined contemporary art, and gave the basis for a new Christian art, accessible to the people, sincere, serious in subject, and, if possible, perfect in technique. He allowed "The Free Age Press" to publish his unfinished "Christian Teaching." Another series dealt with contemporary problems of Russian and foreign life.

CHAPTER XVI

EXCOMMUNICATION AND ILLNESS

TOWARDS the end of the century, Tolstoy's influence was universally recognised. In Russia, people of all classes—especially those whose consciences were awakened and who were dissatisfied with the existing ways of living—began to pay deep attention to his words, and addressed themselves to him for help and encouragement in their initial efforts.

In order to paralyse Tolstoy's influence, the Russian State Church decided to take measures against him. On March 5th, 1901, the Holy Synod issued a ukase excommunicating Tolstoy from the Greek Orthodox Church on account of his false doctrines and un-repentance. This involved deprivation of the protection of the Church, its prayers, and burial in conformity with Orthodox rites.

The excommunication provoked quite unexpected results. On the day of the promulgation of the ukase in Moscow, serious disorders took place

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amongst the students, who were joined by the workers. Excited crowds paraded the main streets and squares. Tolstoy had gone for his usual daily walk and, crossing the square near the Kremlin, he was recognised by the crowd, surrounded, acclaimed, and treated with the greatest manifestations of respect and sympathy. With difficulty he succeeded in freeing himself and driving home. There, already, deputations were awaiting him, and greetings and manifestations continued the whole day. Flowers, presents, and expressions of sympathy poured in from all sides and, as Tolstoy himself said, he was fêted as if it were his birthday. These tokens of feeling grew as the news of the ukase gradually spread to more distant parts of the country.

To the ukase Tolstoy replied by a short but powerful exposition of his conception of Christianity. In this document he made the remarkable statement that not only did he not wish to consider himself a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, but he also even hesitated to call himself a Christian, as this term might obscure truth, dear to him above all. From truth, he said, no existing power could excommunicate him.

It was soon after this epoch-marking incident in his life that Tolstoy fell dangerously ill. When he

began to recover, his family decided that he should spend the winter in the south, and on the doctor's advice the whole family removed, in September, 1901, to the Crimea, and settled at Gaspra, in the villa which Countess Panin had kindly put at Tolstoy's disposal. At every halting-place on the journey, especially at Kharkoff, crowds of people enthusiastically greeted the venerable teacher.

At the beginning of his stay in the Crimea, under the influence of the mild and warm climate, he began to recover rapidly. But later he fell ill with typhus and inflammation of the lungs. These illnesses weakened him terribly, and there were times when his family expected a fatal end; but Tolstoy's strong constitution asserted itself, and he was soon able to resume his work.

During his convalescence he wrote an article in the form of a letter, "To the Tsar and his Associates," in which he described the wretched condition of the Russian people, and suggested a series of reforms which were partially initiated by the Manifesto of November 1st, 1905. He wrote also a number of addresses to people of different professions, working people, clergy, politicians, soldiers, officers, and another letter to the Tsar. In all these appeals he tried to show the right way of living, according to Christ's teaching.

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During his long illness, when he felt himself near the portals of eternity, hours of quiet thought raised and purified his soul. In a letter to the present biographer he wrote :

“I must say one thing: my illness was a great help to me. Much that was foolish left me when I placed myself sincerely face to face with God, or the All of which I am but a transient particle. I saw much evil in myself, which formerly I did not observe. I felt much relieved afterwards. Generally one should say to one's beloved, ‘I do not wish you health, but illness.’ ”

In the autumn of 1902 he returned to Yasnaya Polyana, where he speedily recovered his health and former energy.

On the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war, he shared the general grief and moral suffering of the best part of the Russian people, and with indignation in his heart he issued his severe “Bethink Yourselves.” But life follows its own unknown laws, and we submit to accomplished facts. The Japanese war came to an end, but the physical and moral tension which it had provoked broke loose in a popular agitation.

True to his conviction that the principal object for man is the understanding of the aim of life, Tolstoy continued his work and published a col-

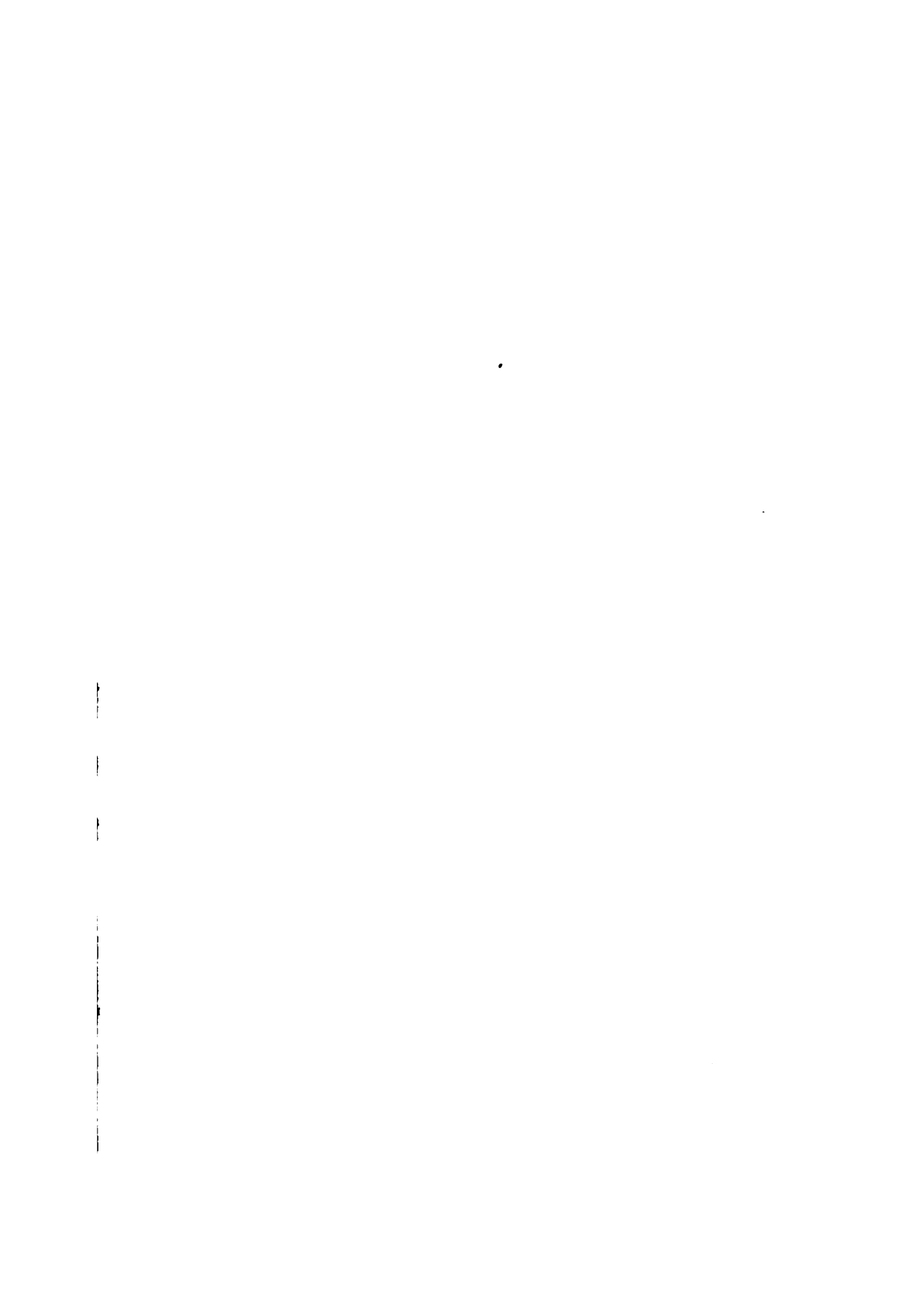
lection of thoughts and aphorisms of the great thinkers of the world. In this collection were brought together for the first time in the Russian language the ideas of the leading thinkers of humanity: Christ, Socrates, Rousseau, Pascal, Buddha, Lao-tsze, and many others.

The wave of social and political agitation grew apace, and caught in its vortex ever larger and larger masses of the people. At last came the fatal January 21st, 1905, with Gapon's demonstration and its sanguinary suppression. All Russia was shaken by the volleys in the streets of St. Petersburg. The whole nation was aroused; new political parties sprang up; strikes took place, as well as armed risings, expropriations, agrarian disorders, and brigandage. The Imperial Manifesto of November 1st was followed by pogroms, the first Duma, then the Vyborg appeal, and afterwards deportations, imprisonment, exceptional laws, and executions.

It was difficult at that time to find one's bearings, and to avoid joining one or other of the struggling parties. But Tolstoy was true to himself. He had to bear reproaches, threats, and abuse from all sides, and people carried away by politics temporarily fell away from him, as he could not share their opinions or those of any political party.



Tolstoy's Tomb.



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Pure and hard as a crystal, he wrote to all those people at strife and enmity among themselves, gently reproaching them, and pointing out the only way of salvation—submission to the will of the Father of Life, and an existence based on reason and love.

CHAPTER XVII

THE JUBILEE OF 1908

TOLSTOY'S fame was now spread all over the civilised world. Telegrams from America asked his opinion on the Russian political movement. Connections were established with Australia, India, Japan, China, and the Mohammedan world. All these varied nationalities, with different languages, customs, and religions, recognised in him a teacher of mankind. In answer, as it were, to this general recognition, Tolstoy began a work which undoubtedly will lay the foundation of a universal religion. He enlarged his collection of thoughts and aphorisms of wise men, and instead of a few quotations for each day he gave systematic tracts on all the fundamental questions of religion, wisdom, and morality, and entitled the work "A Cycle of Reading," for which he wrote some new tales and finished former ones, such as "The Divine and the Human," "Berries," "A Prayer," "Why?" "Korney Vasilyef," etc.

Immediately after the issue of the first edition,

Tolstoy began to revise the book, simplifying, explaining, and rearranging the order of the thoughts of the sages of mankind. Simultaneously he wrote a number of articles, and in one of the longest he dethroned Shakespeare. In another he explained for children the teaching of the New Testament, and with fresh energy he wrote on Single Tax, and a new essay, "The Law of Violence and the Law of Love."

The endless executions of late years were at this time weighing on the Russian people like a nightmare. Tolstoy could no longer witness the suffering, and his bitter cry of protest, "I Cannot be Silent," resounded through the world.

So Tolstoy reached his fourscore years. The Russian nation was preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of their beloved "Grand Old Man," but the day of rejoicing was darkened by the attitude of the Government. Long before the date, articles in the reactionary Press appeared denouncing the honouring of a wicked heretic. Fanatic priests delivered grossly insulting sermons, profaning the very walls of the churches by their vulgar abuse. The Government sent circulars to the local authorities prohibiting the celebration of Tolstoy's anniversary as that of a teacher of morality. Permission alone was given to speak of

him as a literary man. In many places the authorities understood the circular in the sense that it was preferable not to speak at all, and in some towns on the day of the jubilee not a single word on Tolstoy was spoken publicly.

Nevertheless, public feeling could not be quite suppressed. Many Russian and even foreign papers contained on the day articles about Tolstoy, reminiscences, portraits, and sketches. Yasnaya Polyana was overwhelmed with congratulations, gifts, and deputations. The telegrams alone numbered over two thousand. All over Russia, where it was possible, and in many places abroad, soirées, meetings, theatrical representations, were held in honour of Tolstoy. It was clear that the whole of enlightened Russia was unanimous in the expression of admiration for the venerated old man who for so many years had been the conscience of humanity.

In St. Petersburg a committee had been formed for Tolstoy's jubilee. But Tolstoy had expressed the wish that the day should be as quiet as possible, and the committee transformed itself into a society for the foundation of a Tolstoy Museum. This society, in the spring of 1909, organised an interesting Tolstoy exhibition, consisting of original manuscripts and letters, pictures, busts, illustrations, post-cards, and caricatures, all the great author's

published works, from the first to the last, in the Russian and European languages, a quantity of Russian and foreign literature on Tolstoy, and a collection of photographic portraits. So large a number of photographs as was here exhibited can never have been taken of any other man of note.

At this exhibition it was decided that the proposed Tolstoy Museum should contain the greater part of the collections then on view, so that they might be always accessible to the public.

An incident which occurred when Tolstoy passed through Moscow towards the end of 1909 reveals the enormous growth of his popularity. The local papers stated that at one o'clock P.M. he would take the train at the Kursk station for Yasnaya Polyana. By noon a large crowd of people had gathered, who enthusiastically greeted the beloved guest of Moscow, but rarely seen of late in that town.

CHAPTER XVIII

TOLSTOY'S FLIGHT AND DEATH

THE principal work of the last years of Tolstoy's life was the re-editing of "A Cycle of Reading"; he wished to present with greater lucidity the treasure of the world's thoughts collected by him during many years. Modest in appreciation of his own work, to this "Cycle of Reading" he gave a great importance.

"All my chatterings," he said, with his habitual severity to himself, "will be forgotten, but this work will survive."

And it is the opinion of many of us that in it he has laid the foundation of the universal religion of which he dreamt in his youth.

Simultaneously with this strenuous intellectual labour, and while carrying on a voluminous correspondence, a process of spiritual illumination was incessantly taking place within Tolstoy. His kindness, goodwill, and affability towards his innumerable visitors, his modesty and austerity regarding himself, reached, in the last year of his life, the

highest degree. This ennobling moral evolution rendered him more and more sensitive to his surroundings, which were in such contrast with his moral conceptions.

This contrast he had felt acutely from the moment of his first spiritual awakening at the end of the seventies. Even then he had begun to think of the necessity of changing his surroundings, or of leaving them altogether. The latter always seemed to him so easy and attractive that he did not trust the impulse, deeming it a highly selfish act to procure peace and freedom for himself at the expense of his family's grief and suffering. Therefore he kept this solution of the problem in abeyance until such time as he might become convinced that all the means he employed for the first method of solution had failed. But this period of suspense was often interrupted by painful scenes. At first these were of rare occurrence, then more frequent, until, in the last year of his life, they became almost incessant; and those for the sake of whom he had sacrificed all that was most dear rendered his life unbearable.

All who knew Tolstoy intimately are convinced that the idea to leave his home had been ripening in his mind for a long time. The proof of this is contained in a recently published letter to his wife,

Countess Sophie, written in 1897, which, however, he never sent to her. It bears the inscription, "To be delivered after my death." This letter explains so clearly and calmly the reasons for his departure that it is necessary to quote it in full :

"DEAR SONYA,—Already for a long time I have been tortured by the contradiction existing between my life and my religious convictions. I could not oblige you to change your life—the habits to which I myself accustomed you—neither could I leave you till now, lest I should deprive the children whilst they were young of such small influence as I had on them, and grieve you. But I cannot continue living as I have lived these sixteen years, sometimes quarrelling with and irritating you, sometimes submitting to the comfort to which I am accustomed and with which I am surrounded ; and now I have decided to carry out that which for a long time I have wished to do—to go away ; firstly, because with my advancing years this life grows more and more trying, and I long for isolation ; secondly, because the children are grown up, my influence at home is no longer necessary, and you all have more absorbing interests which will make my absence unnoticeable. But especially, like the Hindus who at the age of sixty retire to the forests,

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like every religious old man desires to devote the last years of his life to God, and not to jokes, games, gossip, or tennis, so I, reaching my seventieth year, with all the strength of my soul am seeking rest, isolation, and, if not absolute harmony, at least not a crying contradiction of my life with my convictions and conscience. If I carried out this plan openly there would be entreaties, disapproval, disputes, complaints, and I might be shaken and not accomplish my end.

“ So I pray you all forgive me if my act will grieve you—especially you, Sonya. Consent with good will to my going; do not search for me; do not complain; and do not condemn me.

“ If I leave you, it is not a proof that I am dissatisfied with you. I know that you could not—literally could not and cannot—see and feel as I do, and consequently you could not and cannot change your life and make sacrifices for that which you cannot conceive. Therefore I do not blame you, but on the contrary gratefully and lovingly remember the thirty-five years of our life together—especially the first part, when you, with your inborn mother's devotion, so energetically and steadfastly followed what you considered your vocation. You have given me and the world what you could give; you gave much motherly love and abnegation, and

that cannot be sufficiently appreciated. But during the last period of our life—the last fifteen years—we have become estranged. I cannot think that I am wrong, because I know that I changed not for my own sake, not for that of others, but because I could not do otherwise. And neither can I blame you that you did not follow me; on the contrary, I thank you, and with love remember and will remember what you have given me.

“ Good-bye, dear Sonya.

“ Yours lovingly,

“ LEO TOLSTOY.”

“ $\frac{8}{20}$ *July*, 1897.”

A similar letter Tolstoy wrote to his wife in July, 1910, enjoining her in the kindest, most touching, and loving terms to put aside her anxieties, and to be tranquil, adding that if she could not adopt this peaceful way he had decided to leave home.

A week before carrying out his decision he spoke in detail about it to his friend Michael Novikoff, the peasant, to whom he said that he had firmly made up his mind to leave his home in the near future. On taking leave of him he added :

“ We shall soon see each other again.”

On November 6th he wrote to Novikoff :

“ In connection with what I told you the other

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day I have to make the following request: If I really should come to you, could you not find for me in your village a separate and warm hut, however small, so that I need not inconvenience you for long? One thing more: if it should be necessary to send you a telegram I shall not sign it with my name, but 'T. Nikolaef.' I shall await your answer. Friendly handshake.

"Do not forget that this must be between ourselves."

On the morning of November 10th Tolstoy's final decision was taken. He rose early, and hurriedly made preparations for the journey. First of all he wrote a letter to his wife:

"4 o'clock. Morning of November 10, 1910.

"My departure grieves you. I am sorry, but that I cannot act in another way, understand and believe. My position at home is becoming, and has become, unbearable. And, besides, I cannot continue to live in the condition of luxury in which I have lived, and I am going to do now what old people of my age usually do—retire from worldly life, in order to spend in peace and quietness the remainder of their existence.

"Please understand me and do not follow me, even if you know where I am. Such a course would

make your and my position yet worse, but would not change my resolution.

“I thank you for your forty-eight years honest life with me, and beg you to pardon me all my shortcomings, as I, from the depth of my soul, pardon whatever may have appeared to me faulty in you. I advise you to resign yourself to the new condition created by my departure, and not to feel any resentment against me. If you wish to communicate with me, tell Sasha ; she will know where I am and forward what is necessary. She cannot tell you where I am, as I took her promise not to divulge this to anyone.

“LEO TOLSTOY.

“P.S.—I told Sasha to collect and send me my manuscripts and things.”

Then he awoke his friend, Dr. Makovitski, and his daughter Sasha, and with their assistance packed, went to the stable, and ordered a carriage to take him and the doctor to the station at Schekino. He was trembling during the drive, from fear of pursuit. At last he was in the train ; the train started. There had been no pursuit, and he calmed himself. Doubt as to the righteousness of his decision he had none, but pity awoke in him for his deserted wife. Towards evening the trav-

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ellers reached the Optin Monastery, spent the night there, and the following day continued the journey twelve miles further to the Shamardin Convent. Among the nuns there was Tolstoy's sister, Marie. She received him lovingly, and he felt so satisfied there that he intended to stay some time and even began to make inquiries for a hut in the nearest village.

But his health since his departure from home had not been satisfactory, and it became necessary to travel further. At first he had experienced only a feeling of weakness, then drowsiness, but soon after leaving Shamardin Convent he felt cold and feverish. Once more the journey had to be broken. The doctor and Sasha decided to stop at Astapovo, a station on the Ural-Ryazan railway. Tolstoy's intention had been to travel south without any fixed plan, hoping to come to a definite decision on the way. The good-natured station-master, Ivan Osolin, offered his apartments to Tolstoy, and his little house has consequently become a place of historic interest, and its fame is world-wide.

Leo Tolstoy's end was near, for inflammation of the lungs set in. Gently and patiently bearing the physical suffering, he quietly ebbed away. In moments of consciousness and strength he conversed with those around him, was interested in

letters, sometimes joked, and sometimes, impressed by the solemnity of the moment, uttered words of deep wisdom. His diary, kept till four days before his death, ends with the words :

“ Also my plan, *fais ce que doit, adv*—* All is for the best, for others, and especially for myself.”

During the last days he more than once repeated : “ All is well . . . all is simple and well . . . well . . . yes, yes.”

His death was so calm and peaceful that it actually had a tranquillising effect on those around him. After successive hours of heavy respiration, the breathing grew suddenly light and easy. A few minutes later this light breathing also ceased. There was an interval of absolute silence—no efforts, no struggle. Then two scarcely audible, deep, long-drawn sighs . . .

On November 22nd the body was conveyed to the Saseka railway station, where it was met by a group of relations and near friends and a large crowd—mostly peasants, students, and deputations from Moscow.

The imposing simplicity of the funeral made a touching and exalting impression. The chanting of the “ De Profundis ” by the many thousands following the rude coffin, which was borne by

* *Fais ce que doit, advienna que pourra.*

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peasants, heightened the impression. At the head of the cortège were two peasants, bearing an improvised banner of coarse linen, attached to two birch poles, with the inscription :

THE MEMORY OF YOUR GOOD DEEDS WILL NOT
DIE AMONGST US.

THE ORPHANED PEASANTS OF YASNAYA POLYANA.

The coffin was brought home to Yasnaya Polyana, and placed in a room on the ground floor. It was left open, and a vast number of people filed past to gaze once again, and for the last time, on the great teacher's beloved features.

To the singing of funeral hymns the body was carried out by Tolstoy's sons. The assembled people knelt as it passed. Through the garden, through the wood, the coffin was carried, to the small ravine at the edge of the wood where, near the road, the grave had been prepared. On this spot, according to Leo Tolstoy, his brother Nicolas had buried the imaginary green wand on which was inscribed the way to make men happy. With contented, happy thoughts the great teacher of life had passed into eternity, and beside that symbol of universal happiness he had desired to be buried.

When the body was lowered into the grave the people again knelt and, in deep silence, thousands of heads were bent in prayer. In the solemn hush, the thud of the frozen earth thrown on the lowered coffin was heard.

Soon the clods were heaped up over the grave and covered with wreaths and flowers. Beneath lay all the earthly remains of the beloved Grand Old Man. But his spirit is alive and hovering over us ; he is present ; his words are sounding in our ears. It is our duty to strive with all our strength to realise his ideal of Love and Reason.

LIST OF TOLSTOY'S WORKS

Those works which are generally accepted as the most important are printed in blacker type. The dates show when the works were first published.

NOVELS

Childhood	1852
Boyhood	1854
Youth	1855-57
Sebastopol	1854-55
The Cossacks	1861
War and Peace	1864-69
Anna Karenin	1873-76
The Kreutzer Sonata	1889
Resurrection	1899
Hadji Murat	Not yet published
Father Sergius	Not yet published

PLAYS

The Power of Darkness (drama)	1886
The Fruits of Enlightenment (comedy)	1889
The Corpse (unfinished drama)	Not yet published

STORIES AND SKETCHES

A Morning of a Landowner	1852
A Raid	1852
The Cutting of the Forest	1855
Notes of a Billiard Marker	1856
Two Hussars	1856
An Encounter	1856
The Snowstorm	1856
Lucerne.	1857
Albert	1857
Three Deaths	1859
Family Happiness	1859
Polikushka	1860
The Decembrists	1863-68
The Prisoner of the Caucasus	1872
The Death of Ivan Ilyitch	1886
Holstomer	1888
A Talk Among Idle People	1892
Master and Servant	1895
Singing in the Village	1909
Four Days in the Village	1910
The False Coupon	Not yet published
After the Ball	Not yet published

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

First Recollections	1878
Confession	1879
The Claim of Love (from his diary)	1899

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EDUCATIONAL

The following were the chief articles among many which Tolstoy published in his review *Yasnaya Polyana* :

A Project for a General Plan for Elementary Schools	}	1861-62
On Popular Education		
Education and Instruction		
Progress and the Definition of Instruction		
A Primer		1872
On Popular Instruction		1874
A New Primer		1875

ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS BOOKS AND ESSAYS

A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology	1880
A Short Exposition of the Gospel	1881
The Four Gospels Unified and Translated	1881
Church and State	1882
What is My Faith?	1884
On Life	1887
The Love of God and of One's Neighbour	1889
Timothy Bondareff	1890
Why Do Men Intoxicate Themselves?	1890
On Non-Resistance	1890
The First Step (on vegetarianism)	1892
The Kingdom of God is Within You; or Christianity not as a Mystical Teaching but as a New Conception of Life	1893
Non-Activity	1893

The Meaning of the Refusal of Military Service	1893
Reason and Religion	1894
Religion and Morality	1894
Christianity and Patriotism.	1894
Non-Resistance (a letter to Ernest H. Crosby)	1896
How to Read the Gospels	1896
The Deception by the Church	1896
Christian Teaching	1898
On Suicide	1900
Thou Shalt Not Kill	1900
Reply to the Holy Synod	1901
The Only Way	1901
On Religious Toleration.	1901
What is Religion ?	1902
To the Orthodox Clergy.	1903
Thoughts of Wise Men (compilation)	1904
The Only Need	1905
The Great Sin	1905
A Cycle of Reading (compilation)	1906
Do Not Kill	1906
Love Each Other	1906
An Appeal to Youth	1907
The Law of Violence and the Law of Love	1908
The Only Command	1909
For Every Day (compilation)	1909

ART AND LITERATURE

What is Art ?	1897
Art and Not Art	1897

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Shakespeare and the Drama 1906

Prefaces to :

A Translation of "Modern Science," by Edward Carpenter

Dr. Alice Stockham's "Toxology"

Orloff's Album

Amiel

Free Translations of Stories by :

Guy de Maupassant

Bernardin de St. Pierre

**SHORT RELIGIOUS AND DIDACTIC STORIES AND
TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE**

What People are Living By	1881
Where Love is, There is God	1885
Two Old Men	1885
A Fire Neglected Consumes the House	1885
Nicolas Stick (Tsar Nicolas I.)	1886
Does a Man Require Much Land ?	1886
Ilias	1886
The Godson	1886
The Three Hermits	1886
The Candle	1886
The Repenting Sinner	1886
The First Distiller	1886
Ivan the Fool	1886
The Empty Drum	1887
Walk in the Light While the Light is With You	1893
Three Parables	1894

Ezraheddon	1903
Three Questions	1903
The Restoration of Hell	1903
Work, Death and Sickness	1903
A Prayer	1905
Berries	1905
Korney Vasilyeff	1905
Why ?	1906
The Divine and the Human	1906
A Letter on Science to a Peasant	1909
Published by <i>Posrednik</i> after Tolstoy's death :	
False Beliefs	}
Life in Reality	
On Religion	
The Soul	
Love	
The Sexual Instinct	
God	
Sins, Temptation and Superstitions	
Excesses	
The Similarity of Men's Souls	
Pride	
Effort	
Wrath	
Vanity	
Parasitism	
False Science	
	1911

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SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES

The Census of Moscow (in 1882)	1882
Letter to M. A. Engelhardt	1882
What Then Must We Do?	1886
On Women	1886
On Manual Labour	1887
Mental Activity and Manual Labour	1888
Culture's Feast (on the anniversary of the Moscow University)	1889
Letter to a Revolutionist	1889
On the Famine (reports and letters)	1891-93
Shame! (against corporal punishment)	1895
Patriotism and Peace	1896
To the Liberals	1896
To the Ministers	1896
The Approach of the End	1896
A Letter to a Non-Commissioned Officer.	1897
On the Hague Peace Conference	1899
Two Wars	1899
Who Is to be Blamed?	1899
Carthago Delenda Est	1899
The Slavery of our Times	1900
Where is the Issue?	1900
Patriotism and Government.	1900
Is it Really Necessary?	1900
To the Tsar and his Associates	1901
The Nearing End of the Age	1901
Mementoes for Soldiers	1901

Mementoes for Officers	1901
On the Working-Class Problem	1902
Letters to the Tsar	1902
To the Working People	1902
To Men of Politics	1903
To Social Reformers	1903
Letter to Pietro Mazzini	1903
Bethink Yourselves	1904
In the Russian Revolution	1904
How to Emancipate the Working Classes	1905
A Great Injustice (on the land problem)	1905
On the Social Movement in Russia	1905
The End of the Age	1905
An Appeal to the People	1906
On Military Service	1906
On the Meaning of the Russian Revolution	1906
What Must be Done?	1906
An Appeal to the Government, the Revolutionists and the People	1907
The Only Solution of the Land Question	1907
I Cannot be Silent (a protest against the wholesale executions)	1908
Concerning Molochnikoff's Arrest	1908
The Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	1908
The Inevitable Revolution	1909
An Address to the Stockholm Peace Conference	1909
An Efficient Remedy (last article, published three days after his death by the St. Peters- burg daily paper <i>Rietch</i>)	1910

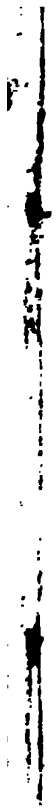
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